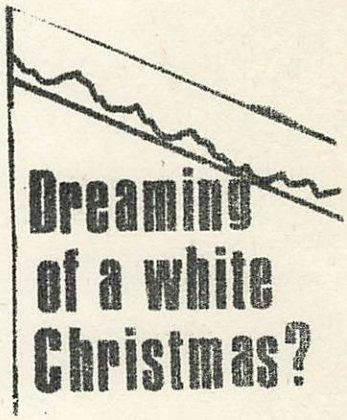
YOUR Christmas BING

No 36

ENTERTAINMENT



Dreaming of a white Christmas?

DECEMBER | **1974**

BING

Official Magazine of the
INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Issue 36
Dec. 1974

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Here is the Christmas, 1974 issue! But there is a little pill to be swallowed first: the quicker the better! As from now subscriptions have again, to be raised from the present £1.30p per annum to £1.50p. This is not, of course, retrospective and applies to renewals due now and henceforth. In these troublous times we are sure it is not necessary for us to disclaim any intention of jumping on the inflationary bandwagon. The issue is simple: this must be done if BING, and the ICC, is to continue. Not only is it now extremely difficult to find supplies of paper, ink, stencils, envelopes &c., but each time they are run to earth the price of them has shot up. We will not dwell further on these difficulties but rely entirely on the understanding of members.

We have, indeed, been extremely profligate with this issue, both with paper consumed - and extra postage incurred with a bigger-than-usual issue. But - Christmas comes but once a year!

Pill swallowed - and it is tremendous stuff now, all the way. One of our own members from Bucks has "bumped into Bing" - in Hollywood! A good place... We have several first-hand reports of Bing's triumphant return to the TV screen; much of the fantastic correspondence concerning Bing's proposed London recording session, as well as some highly seasonable stories from our members. When this issue was planned it was the intention to devote a lot of space to readers' always interesting letters. There IS a selection, but in the main, it was finally decided the news and other features coming to hand just could not be left out. It is hoped the result will form part of

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS & A GREAT 1975
to our members!

Membership Rates: £1.50p UK members, per annum.
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Cheques, POs, made payable to ICC, and sent to Secretary Reg Bristo. International Money Orders preferred for overseas readers.

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A CROSBY QUIZ - NOT PARTICULARLY CHRISTMASSY, but fun...

the essence is, of course, that you do NOT immediately consult all the lists, records &c. you hold for the answers!

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1. Can you place the following records in date order (year will do):
   (a) Mule Train. (b) Ballad for Americans (all parts) (c) Walking the Floor Over You; (d) Sweet Leilani; (e) Too Romantic, and (f) Love Thy Neighbour.
2. Who is the "odd-lady-out": Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day, Frances Langford, Connee Boswell and Patty Andrews.
3. What year did "Bing Sings the Great Country Hits" appear?
4. On which Bing recording does someone else sing his signature tune?
5. In which "western" type songs are the following characters mentioned:
   (a) Slim and Tex; (b) Old Dan; (c) Old Reverend Thomas; (d) Old Pinto; and (e) Old Paint.
6. Bing's records are often requested, but in which songs does Bing himself make these requests:
   (a) "Drag out the cooking sherry for the old colonel...."
   (b) I need some resin, too...."
   (c) "I Would like a giant malt..."
7. Two of the traditional songs featured by Bing on HOW THE WEST WAS WON were recorded by him under slightly more sophisticated guise. Name them and their counter-parts,
8. On his musical Autobiography Bing introduces which songs with these remarks:
   (a) "This somewhat lugubrious lament;..."
   (b) "Nothing deathless, but maybe the best side after all..."
   (c) "It does have an infectious lilt - if you happen to be Irish..."
9. A famous novel by Richard Llewellyn, and the title of a song recorded by Bing not issued in this country. What's it called?
10. Do the first names John, Herbert, Harry and Donald mean anything to you?
11. Can you name five of Bing's song titles which contain the word "river"?
12. Who accompanied Bing (orchestra) on the following:
    (a) You're Getting to be a habit with me.
    (b) Stay On the Right side of the road.
    (c) Them There eyes.
    (d) My Heart Goes Crazy.
    (e) Auld Lang Syne.
    (d) South Rampart St. Parade.
    (e) Vaya Con Dios.
13. Name two brothers who led orchestras which both accompanied Bing - at different times.
14. Bing was accompanied by John Scott Trotter, of course, on more records than any other musical director. Who was the "second largest" accompanist?
15. What is unusual about Sunday, Monday or Always/If you Please? And what occasioned this unusual feature?
16. What year did the Rhythm Boys reassemble after their break-up in 1930. What was the occasion?
17. On an English-issue record Bing is accompanied by a certain Captain..... Who is he, and what is the record?
18. Who is the conductor of the Longines Symphonette Orchestra - at least, of the one which accompanied Bing on the Longines set?
19. Bing has played the role of a drunken actor in a film; what other drunken role did he play?
20. Who accompanies Bing on Wolverton Mountain - and which album is it on?

==========

Well, it will be a formidable Crosby admirer who can answer all those straight off! Including all the big boys! It should be a lot of fun, however, and if you refrain from looking up the answers, many of the answers may come to you by associating events with certain songs, certain films. If possible, the answers will be squeezed in later on in this issue. If not, you have until the next issue.....

Happy pondering!

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EDITORIAL

"Bingville"
Southend-on-Sea.

Coincidentally, all December issues of this magazine (since Christmas 1972) have contained items of exceptional interest to the collector and appreciator of Bing Crosby. In "BING"-28 (December 1972) we presented an exclusive nine-page coverage of the events preceding the "PARKINSON" Show (an eight-page review of the televised show, written by Bert Bishop, subsequently appeared in issue 29). In "BING"-32 (December 1973) we announced the existance of "Soft Lights And Sweet Music", take-C, and presented full 'alternate take' notes. The current issue scores the hat trick with the disclosure of a hitherto unlisted Crosby vocal dating back to 1927. Membership of the ICC is certainly worth its weight in gold to anyone proud to call himself a Crosby collector.

In mid-October, your Editor was pleased to receive Bing's 1974 Christmas Message in the form of a recorded tape, and we have pleasure in presenting a transcript of the spoken message on the following two pages. Dubbings will, of course, be made available for the benefit of those who seek to acquire anything and everything recorded by Bing, and further details are printed on page 5.

In yet another ICC 'exclusive', the current issue presents full information on the songs that will be recorded by Bing for his forthcoming albums. Two titles have already been recorded in California in October of this year, and in a letter dated Oct. 25th, KEN BARNES (the producer of the sessions) writes: "Any doubts we have had about the condition of Bing's voice following his operation were dispelled as soon as we heard him sing. What we were most concerned about was his range, which - on certain records we had heard - suggested that he had lost much of his power in the upper register. If this was true, the operation seems to have rectified it! As far as I can tell, Bing's range seems to have expanded by at least a full note at the top of his register. His most comfortable top note is really B flat, but during our rehearsal he was hitting top C with apparent ease and even nudging up to D without too much strain. Also, his tone is much rounder than on records of the last few years. He sounds more like he used to back in the 1940's. But the most remarkable thing of all was the surprising volume of his voice during these rehearsals. It actually sounded bigger than it appears on record. The people at United Artists who have heard the tracks already recorded are wildly delighted at the results!"

With those splendid comments from Ken Barnes ringing in our ears, your Editor signs off by wishing his readers a very happy Christmas. As Bing once said, "May your Christmas stocking be filled overflowing!" (JOHN BASSETT)

On behalf of all members
the ICC
wishes
BING, KATHRYN, MARY FRANCES, HARRY and NATHANIEL CROSBY
a most Holy and Blessed Christmas

BING'S 1974 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Recorded personally by Bing for our members, mid-October, from his own home!

"Well, hello, hello! Happy greetings to the ICC! This is Bing Crosby. John Bassett was in contact with me not too long ago, mid-September I think it was, and he thought that I should be sending my annual message to the ICC members, a written message; but I think it's much nicer to have something personally, by voice that is, so I'm taking advantage of this opportunity to put a few things on tape. I have a very competent recording engineer here, Harry Crosby the third - at least he speaks authoritatively about his craft. I'll wait till I get the play-back to see what it sounds like. I'm rather apprehensive about what he's going to produce; but we'll try!

Well anyhow, it's nice to be able to say hello, to tell you that my health is improving daily. I've been going down to Mexico two or three times, once with the family, a couple of times solo, to play some golf. I have a little interest down there in a town called Guadalajara; a town! - it's a city - a million, seven hundred and fifty thousand people. A big city. Wonderful climate - it's about fifty-five hundred feet altitude, so they don't get the heat that you get on the Gulf side of Mexico or on the Pacific side. Marvellous climate, really, and a nice golf course there, too. I've been breaking eighty once in a while and not too often, mostly eighty and above, but I'm afraid my golf has either deteriorated or my two sons' golf has improved a great deal because they now beat me even. Even the twelve-year-old, Nathaniel, who's soon to be thirteen, beat me Sunday. I won the first nine, and he won the second nine and the match. And I guess the match is what's important. So that's the news from me.

Kathryn's very busy - she's doing a five-times-a-week television show at nine o'clock in the morning on the CBS network. A sort of panel show. She interviews authors, actors, musicians, public figures, prominent doctors, specialists, internists, talks about inoculations and vaccinations and one thing and another - gives her a nice chance to get some exposure and to do some talking - she loves to talk. It certainly keeps her busy. She works about three days a week taping and gets enough shows up ahead so she has a few days off. The family - the children that is - Mary Frances is still very busy with her ballet. It'll be about her eighth or ninth year I believe. She's improving of course, but I don't know whether she's ever going to be a serious ballet dancer, but even if she doesn't go into it seriously at least it's great training for poise and for her figure and it's great discipline, the ballet, for young people.

Well, we ran out of tape there on that side. My engineer didn't have it figured out correctly, I guess. Have to speak to him about that! Have to give him a cut in salary down to fifty cents a week - been getting seventy-five.

In conclusion; I guess I've told you about all the news. The baseball team, though, Pittsburgh, won the division title in the National League. They're in the play-offs now with the Los Angeles Dodgers but they're down two games to zero. They've got to win the next three to get into the World Series - not a likely prospect. The Dodgers have a very good team. But just getting the Eastern Division title is a significant accomplishment and we're all quite happy about that.

In conclusion, may I once again thank you all for your support and for your interest in what I have done in the past, and what I propose to do in the immediate future. Hope that I'm able to arrange a telecast on the BBC of last year's Christmas programme and also of the Variety Special that I just did with Hope and Pearl Bailey and Sandy Duncan. Incidentally, if I may somewhat immodestly tell you, Pearl Bailey said that she thought I was singing better than ever before. No such kind comment was available from Mr. Hope. He said something snide - I forget what it was but it was unfunny, but that's him. He's very good on the show, though. He's got a couple of comedy routines that I think you'll like if the television show plays on BBC - I hope it does.

So thank you all for listening and I hope you have a good time for the rest of the year. I hope 1975 is a more pleasant one for both of us than the one just concluded. Hope none of you have had any surgery but I know that things are kind of grim over there economically in Britain as they are here - in fact, as they are all over the world. We've got to get some way to talk the Middle

East countries out of their oil, I guess!
So goodbye and thank you. Good luck to all!"

BING CROSBY

Taped dubbings are available of Bing's Christmas Message; details and prices as follows: 3" 'open-reel' spool, recorded dual-track at 3¾ i.p.s. - 60 pence (including post and packing), or C 60 cassette tape - 70 pence (including post and packing). Orders and full payment should be sent to the Editor, John Bassett, "Bingville", 72 Stromness Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 4JQ, England. Please make all postal orders, cheques and IMO's payable to the International Crosby Circle.

DEAR LESLIE....

KEN BARNES, producer of Bing's forthcoming recording sessions, writes to our Publicity Officer, Les Gaylor

The following letter, dated November 1st, 1974, appears by courtesy of Leslie and was received for publication after we had stencilled the article entitled "Bing's London Recording Session" on page 7. Consequently, your Editor asks readers to refer to that section of the magazine first, in order to read the latest developments in their correct sequence.

Dear Leslie,

I have been working solidly in the last 10 days in an effort to get my commitments back on a normal footing - but I wouldn't have missed the opportunity to record Bing for anything. If you could have seen the delighted looks on the faces of everyone in the 'United Artists' office as they listened to the voice tracks of Bing and Johnny Mercer, you'd know what I was talking about.

The general opinion is that Bing is sounding better than at any time in the last 10 years - not only is his voice warmer and richer, but it is more expressive and physically much stronger. I honestly think that if Bing is prepared to come to London and work as diligently as he did on the California session, he could make the whole industry sit up and take notice. Right now the commercial conditions could not be more in his favour. United Artists would like to mount a massive international campaign - hopefully based on his 50th Anniversary in show business. This of course will depend on Bing's sanction. His TV production people want to launch a series celebrating this occasion, complete with film clips and Bing singing and narrating his life story. I must say that along with the great box office success of 'That's Entertainment' plus the fact that Bing is now singing so well, there will never be a better time to do this. United Artists honestly feel that they can put Bing into the 'top ten' and are fully prepared to back this project with full scale radio and dealer promotion. And if all that weren't enough, I've had a call from John Fisher of the "PARKINSON" show with an offer to present Bing in a special programme built around the new LP, complete with Pete Moore and the full orchestra, plus - if he wants to make the trip - Johnny Mercer as guest. This TV contact, I know, came from your enthusiastic promotional efforts, but it seems to have grown to even greater proportions than any of us could have visualised. Here's a first class opportunity for Bing, not only to make a great album but to go on television and plug it on the biggest rated show in the country. What a coup!

The 'Broadway' LP is still being discussed. We have thought about making it "SONGS OF STAGE & SCREEN". At the last routining session, Bing ran through about 18 songs. Here's the list:
My heart stood still/You are too beautiful/Dancing on the ceiling/Yours sincerely/Glocca Morra/Something to remember you by/Send in the clowns/Thou swell/You took advantage of me/With a song in my heart/I'll never fall in love again/Raindrops keep falling on my head/Hello Dolly/Cabaret/Looking at you/Just in time/On a clear day/Great day.

This may not be anything like the final list as the general package is still being kicked around. Personally, I favour calling the album "THAT'S BROADWAY" and designing the sleeve in a similar way to "That's Entertainment". U.A. also like the idea - but naturally we all want Bing to be happy in what he is doing. We're all hoping he makes the trip over. Sincerely - KEN BARNES.

Owners of the RCA-Victor LP "THE BIX BEIDERBECKE LEGEND" (RD-27225) will be familiar with the impressive statement printed across the front of the slecve. It reads: "With this album of Bix records, all existing collections become incomplete. For this set includes that rarest of all collector's items...an unplayed, unlisted,master recording".

In similar vein, the ICC proudly announces that...

****
* WITH THIS EDITION OF "BING", ALL EXISTING COLLECTIONS BECOME INCOMPLETE. *
* FOR THIS ISSUE CONTAINS DETAILS OF WHAT WILL NOW BECOME ONE OF THE MOST *
* SOUGHT AFTER CROSBY RECORDINGS...AN UNLISTED VOCAL REFRAIN WITH THE PAUL *
* WHITEMAN ORCHESTRA. *
****

Having said that, we invite you to peruse one of the most outstanding news items ever to appear in the pages of this magazine.

DISCOVERY OF AN UNLISTED BING TITLE by the EDITOR

The ICC has the greatest pleasure in announcing the discovery of a hitherto unlisted Bing Crosby recording, 47 years old and the first of its kind to be found since the completion of the Crosby discographies. This is <u>not</u> an alternate 'take' (some of which are unearthed occasionally) but an unlisted title.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that Bing is distinctly heard singing part-solo in a vocal group, the other members of which are known to consist of Charles Gaylord, Jack Fulton and Austin Young. The same vocal combination can be found on Bing's recording of "The Calinda" (matrix A39575-2).

It must be made clear at this stage that our findings are based on aural evidence alone, for it unlikely that the Victor recording sheets identify the individual vocalists.

The record in question is as follows:-

"OOH! MAYBE IT'S YOU" (matrix A39572)
by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra.

Takes 1, 2, 3 and 4 recorded 17 August, 1927
Takes 5, 6, 7 and 8 recorded 22 August, 1927

Take-7 issued on UK His Master's Voice B5415 (released February, 1928)
Take-8 issued on US Victor 20885.

The examined pressing shows take-7 and a careful study of the vocal chorus is presented below:-

Ooh, <u>maybe it's</u> you,)
<u>making me</u> blue,) First verse sung by Crosby, Gaylord, Fulton
maybe it's you.) and Young. Bing is distinctly heard <u>solo</u> on
the underlined lyrics.

Ooh, what'll I do,)
if it were you,) Second verse sung in close harmony by Crosby,
making me blue.) Gaylord, Fulton and Young. Bing's voice is
recognisable on the words 'do', 'you' and 'blue'.

I went and had my fortune read,)
Someone's to blame, the gypsy said,) **Third** verse sung solo,
But she wouldn't say -) probably by Fulton.

Who, <u>maybe it's</u> you,)
<u>making me</u> blue,) Fourth verse. See notes relating to the
maybe it's you.) first verse.

(A cornet solo, played in a style associated with Beiderbecke's work, can be heard accompanying the vocalists. However, this title is not listed in a contemporary Beiderbecke discography)

It is our considered opinion that there cannot be any doubt of Bing's participation in this recording. During the course of the past 10 weeks, various collectors have been given the opportunity to study this record, having been supplied with taped dubbings. In some instances your Editor has personally played the disc to members visiting "Bingville", and on all occasions the

same conclusions have been reached - this is an authentic Crosby recording and as such it prompts the inevitable question: what is the likelihood of further unlisted items being unearthed? In the light of this recent discovery, one cannot easily dismiss such a possibility. It has happened once - it can happen again.

COLIN PUGH writes: Since the birth of popular music there have always been people who try to sing or play like others. I have never pretended to be an expert on voice patterns and I'd be the first to admit that I could be taken in by a good impersonation. However, having heard this recording I would swear that this is Bing.

We are indebted to JIM HAYES for supplying most of the discographical information used in this special announcement. All members are asked to enter the details of this recording (as given on page 6) into their copies of the ICC's discographical publications.

****
* PERMISSION IS GRANTED FOR THIS ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE RE-PRINTED IN FULL BY *
* THE VARIOUS MAGAZINE EDITORS RECEIVING THIS EDITION OF "BING", PARTICU- *
* LARLY PATRICIA SULLIVAN AND KENNETH E. GRAY OF THE AMERICAN CLUB CROSBY. *
****

BING'S LONDON RECORDING SESSION

Latest news from KEN BARNES

Since the last edition of the magazine, the ICC has been in close contact with Ken Barnes (author of "SINATRA AND THE GREAT SONG STYLISTS") regarding the possibility of Bing recording an album in London. In a letter dated October 1st, Ken wrote: I am happy to tell you that the project is definitely on. At the time of writing it looks as though the sessions will take place at Chappells Recording Studio on November 25, 26 and 27. Of course, these dates are subject to Bing's actual availability. Bing has expressed a firm interest in having Great Britain's Pete Moore do the orchestrations. Pete and I are flying to California on October 7 and will be routining the songs with Bing later in the week.

A further letter, dated October 26th, read: My recent trip was a complete success. Bing is certainly the most professional artiste to work with. Our tentative dates were in November, but Bing found he was unable to make the trip at that time. Furthermore, he reckoned that it was hardly worth coming over simply to record a dozen songs. He has suggested that if a second LP were to be made at the same time, this might make the journey worthwhile. I have got permission from London to record a second LP and Bing is now thinking about coming over around late January, early February. If not, we will have to record the orchestral tracks here and put Bing's vocals down in California. Artistically, this is not a satisfying way to record an album, but if all else fails, it will work mechanically, at least.

During Ken's visit to America, on the morning of October 17th in Burbank, California, Bing recorded two duets with Johnny Mercer which will be included in the first album that Ken is producing for United Artists. The titles are as follows:

"The Pleasure of Your Company") both composed by Mercer
"Good Companions") and Previn.

These have been recorded with piano, bass and drums only. Full orchestra will be added when the remaining titles are recorded in London.

The first album will be entitled "THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT" and will contain the following songs:-

"That's What Life is all About"
"Bon Vivant"
"Some Sunny Day"
"No Time at All"
"I Love to Dance Like They Used to Dance"
(add to these the above two duets).
"The Best Things in Life are Free"
"Breezing Along with the Breeze"
"The Good Old Times"
"Razzle Dazzle"
"Have a Nice Day" (not to be confused with the title on "BING 'N BASIE" LP)

The second album will contain a selection of some of Bing's favourite Broadway songs. 12 or 14 titles will be chosen from a possible 1 already routined.

OUR BING IS A-OKAY

by PAT SULLIVAN of the American Club Crosby

The following adventure will be included in the Fall edition of "BING-GANG" but I wanted to share it in advance with members of the ICC.

As you will know, Bing taped a TV show with Bob Hope, Pearl Bailey and Sandy Duncan which was telecast on CBS, October 9th. Thanks to Larry Crosby, Priscilla and I were able to see not only the studio show but the pre-taping sessions as well which took place on August 10th and 11th at the Palace Theatre in Hollywood. We were in the theatre for a total of some 15 hours and, except for two half-hour lunch breaks, Bing was there continuously either performing, rehearsing, watching, or sitting in the audience chatting with crew and cronies.

Any fears we've had about his health are completely dispelled, and I can't possibly exaggerate how super he looked and sounded. When he came out to record his first song - a great new number about growing old, with lyrics tailored especially for him - it was a nervous moment for everyone. After all, it had only been eight months since the removal of two-thirds of his lung. Bing sounds exactly the same - if anything, even better. A little later, Pearl Bailey summed it up in her inimitable way with the quip, "Bing baby, I swear they didn't take something out of you in that hospital - they put something in!"

Many times Bing was draped over a seat in the aisle directly across from us exchanging stories with the producer and crew, and it was almost like seeing a caricature - that's how true to form he was. He was dressed in the most god-awful pair of plaid pants with colours of blue, red, purple, yellow and you name it; green socks; and a golf cap which he removed occasionally to scratch his head - no toupee. He seemed genuinely happy - whistled, danced, broke into song compulsively, and was literally convulsed with laughter several times in antics with Hope.

During rehearsals Bing is loose, spontaneous, and funnier than Hope. In front of a live audience, it's the reverse. Bing tightens up and follows the script whilst Bob is all charged up and the ad-libs just flow forth. It's a shame that so much of the fun and spirit of the rehearsals is lost in the TV version. You can appreciate the fun Bob had singing "Moonlight becomes you, it goes with your hair, you certainly know the right thing to wear" to toupee-less Bing in his plaid pants, compared to the TV version sung to Bing clad in tuxedo and toupee!

The new songs, written especially for the show, are the solo, "It's Time To Start Living", a number with Peal and Sandy called "Delivery", and the opening and closing theme, "Feels Good". The philosophy in Bing's solo is: "Maybe, if I refuse to grow old, I can stay young till I die". Some of the lyrics are as follows:

> "When your best years are yester, the rest are twice as dear"
> and "I've had the troubles and fears of seventy years, but the only thing I'd trade them for is seventy more".

The recordings were done effortlessly in two or three run-throughs. The lip sync (with four people singing simultaneously) was the tricky part. They rehearsed and pre-taped most of the numbers on Saturday (1.30 to 8.30). On Sunday (1.30 to 6.30) they rehearsed three additional numbers which were then taped in front of a live audience (7.00 to 9.30).

Bing had a great deal of trouble getting started in the right key for "Where The Blue Of The Night" in the medley number during the live taping, and had to be coached from the sidelines! It was frustrating for him because he had reservations on the 9.40 final flight to San Francisco. Bob quipped, "Can you imagine having to stop a show in order to teach him that song? - I just can't believe it". Bing received a long standing ovation at the end, and he did miss the plane!

It was a joy seeing Bing and Bob together, and Priscilla and I were even more than joyful at seeing Bing look so fit.

Larry Crosby had invited us as his guests, and he really meant it. He came down to the theatre on Sunday to take us to dinner but when it was obvious that the show would run really late, we changed the plans for a late arrival at his house instead. Larry, now in his late 70's, has a house in the Truesdale Estates area of Beverly Hills - complete with a panoramic view of Los Angeles from our guest room, a swimming pool, the works - but very unpretentiously furnished. Larry showed us his 'Rogues Gallery' of family pictures on the wall and fixed

breakfast for us on the Monday morning before we left for the airport. He still goes to the office every day, does all his own cooking ("Such as it is", he said) and has no servants other than a maid who comes in to clean.

Needless to say, the weekend had a quality of unreality about it and I'm still not back to normal. I hope that the above imparts something of the flavour of the adventure, and I knew you would want to know that our Bing is A-okay.

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The following extracts are taken from a recent edition of a Florida newspaper: "EXCLUSIVE! Kathy Crosby reveals for the first time: Bing was just 5 days from death"....For the first time, beautiful Kathryn Crosby has revealed that her famous husband Bing Crosby was just five days from death when doctors performed emergency surgery on his left lung last January. "Bing had a disease that's usually fatal when it develops as badly as it did in his lung", Kathryn disclosed. "The doctors are certain he would have died if they hadn't operated when they did". In an exclusive interview at the Crosby's luxurious three-storey home in San Francisco, the slender actress told us, "It was an anguishing time. But now I can talk about it because I know Bing is completely well again. I visualised life without Bing", she said softly, "and it was just empty space. I honestly believe I married the man every woman in the world would like to marry. He absolutely has the most invincible charm of any human being. He is so funny, and he is never boring".

Doctors at first believed that Bing had cancer - a possibility which terrified Kathryn. "I knew there was a good chance he might die", she said, "and I just didn't see how I could manage without him. On the day of the operation, the children and I went to our church, and the priest said a mass for our family. Then he went to visit Bing. I tried not to let Bing know how worried I was. So when it came time to leave, I just said 'See you later.' But all the way home I realised that I might be without Bing forever - and it was such a vast feeling of emptiness. I remember thinking all sorts of odd things. I remembered that I didn't have a black suit, and I wondered what to do about the funeral because Bing had said before that he didn't want a service of any kind. Then at 2 p.m. the doctors told me that he would be all right. They said they'd removed a large tumor from his lung - but it wasn't cancer. They said the tumor was caused by a bacterial infection called nocardia, and that he would have died in five days if they hadn't operated. Now he's so fit that I can barely keep up with him! Around the house Bing sings all the time. We don't need a hi-fi system because listening to him is pleasure enough". Kathryn paused thoughtfully, reflecting on her life with a show business legend. Then she added, "The past 16 years with Bing have been wonderful".

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KEEPING TRACK

BERT BISHOP, COLIN PUGH and RON DANIELS review the latest record releases featuring Bing.

Amid a welter of 'popacophony' (to coin a word) stacking the racks of the record shops, what other - and more melodious - sounds may be heard above the merry ringing of Christmas cash registers at this 1974 Yuletide season? Happily, we are able to report yet another goodly selection of Bing LP's, selections and complete albums to delight the eye, soothe the ear and pleasurably handle, and what better way to introduce this quarter's selection than by commencing with the most famous song title of all time?

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"WHITE CHRISTMAS", Coral MCF-2568 (UK, £2.21) (Cassette TCMCF-2568, Cartridge 8XMCF-2568). Although a re-issue of the originally entitled "MERRY CHRISTMAS", and not to be confused with the sound-track LP of the film "White Christmas", it makes a welcome appearance upon the current Bing record scene, for many original copies must be showing signs of a little wear I would imagine! No change in the sleeve except for the one word substitution.

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For the 'compleat collector' re-issues must prove something of an anethema, but the comparatively newly introduced stereo 'enhancement' must infuse a certain enthusiasm into the action, so stand by for yet another release of "BING - A MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BING CROSBY", Coral CDMSP 801 (UK 5-LP set, £7.35). Too many titles to list here (88) so refer to the LP-OGRAPHY for details of this best-

selling boxed album. At about 8p a track with linking dialogue by Bing, this must be good value and deserves the large sales that it has previously enjoyed.

****

Although reviewed, insofar as the Crosby content is concerned, in the previous edition of "BING", it is welcome news that there is now available in the UK a re-lease of "THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT" on MGM 2659 033. (2-LP set, £3.92 - prices vary but the 'list price' is quoted here).

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At the time of compiling this article there is news of an impending release in the UK of another Christmas album (probably available by the time this comes to your attention) entitled "CHRISTMAS WITH THE STARS" on Coral CDL-8018 (plus cassette and cartridge). No information of the Bing content available as we 'go to press' but details will be printed in the next issue.

****

"SING A RAINBOW", Coral 'Rainbow Series' CDL 8016 (UK, £1.47) includes artistes such as Louis Armstrong, Ink Spots, Hoagy Carmichael, Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland and Peggy Lee ... so says the October edition of 'New Records'. Despite the wealth of talent encompassed by those names it comes as somewhat of a surprise to find that there is no mention of Bing, who must surely eclipse them all! Not only Bing, but son Gary, featured on the perrenial favourite, "Sam's Song".

****

Another MCA collection of 'oldies' features many of the artistes mentioned above; it also manages to produce an incorrectly titled Bing track. "REMEMBER THEM", Australian MCA (Decca) COPS 7403, quotes "Just a couple of song and dance men" on label and sleeve. It will be realised that the word 'Just' is superfluous and that this title is the Crosby/Astaire duet that was featured in "Blue Skies". Again, an LP strictly for label collectors, as far as Bing is concerned.

****

Another Australian issue, "A NOSTALGIC HOUR OF BING CROSBY", MCA (Decca) MAPS 6328, presents 22 of Bing's most popular songs in an album which is very much in the mould of 'the best of Bing'. Two or three tracks appear in stereo for the first time, but otherwise there can scarcely be a track that is not in the collection of even the newest member/collector.

****

A collection of 20 tracks from previously issued 'Windmill' LPs is assembled on a UK release, "SOLID GOLD SIXTY", Windmill WSR 20, but Bing gets a look in on only one track - "Lazybones" - from a radio transcription with Louis Armstrong.

****

"THEMES LIKE OLD TIMES" US Viva 2VV 2572, is an expanded 2-LP version of the originally titled issue detailed in the LP-OGRAPHY. 180 introductory themes to early American radio shows, and the 13th item on the first side of this continuous-play trackless album is "Where the Blue of the Night" from Bing's Philco Radio Time.

****

Following the same theme; radio; we now have track details of two albums briefly reviewed in the last edition of "BING". Firstly, "WHEN RADIO WAS KING" Memorabilia MLP-705: Bing's Chesterfield show of 25th April 1951:-

Side one	Side two
One of the roving kind	*Gone fishin'
If they made me a king	*Old soldiers never die

(Remaining items non-Bing. *Issued commercially by Decca)

Secondly, "BING'S BEAUS" Flankenzudeutsch (Amalgamated) MTDB-05: Bing's Chesterfield shows, circa 1952:-

Side one	Side two
I love my baby	Just the way you are
Singing in the rain	Just a gigolo
La vie en rose	Beyond the reef
Am I in love	(Remaining items non-Bing)
At last	

The 'beaus' in question are Marlene Deitrich and Tallulah Bankhead who duet on certain of the above numbers with Bing, and the programmes also credit that 'regular gal', Miss Peggy Lee. Catch it if you can!

****

Amalgamated of the USA have again produced what sounds like a most fascinating album entitled "TOP HAT, WHITE TIE AND GOLF SHOES", Tap-Time Facit 142. Bing,

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers are the featured stars of this collection of non-commercial recordings. The sleeve produces and implies a certain amount of entertainment in itself. The frontispiece portrays, left to right, Bing, Fred and Ginger sitting in a row; there are dialogue 'balloons' over their heads which read, "But Fred, why don't I get to sing with Ginger, also?"; Fred replies, "Frankly, old man, she's never heard of you!", to which Ginger responds with, "Don't quarrel boys, ot I'll replace you with Sinatra and Kelly!"

The back of the sleeve relates the following information concerning the content:

Side one	Side two
CROSBY & ASTAIRE	TOP HAT (Astaire and Rogers only)
Where the blue of the night (orch. intro.)	
Dialogue (Bing and Ken Carpenter)	
Life is so peculiar (Bing solo)	
Nevertheless (Bing solo)	
Dialogue (Bing and Fred)	
The thing (Bing and Fred)	
Just one more chance (Bing solo)	
Beyond the reef (Bing solo)	
Dialogue (Bing and Fred)	

****

Never before has virtually the entire musical content of a Crosby film turned up on a commercial recording insofar as being from the original sound-track of the film. "THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1932" (US) Sountrak ST-101, must therefore be considered to be breaking fresh ground in a very fruitful field. The Bing content only is shown below:

Side one	Side two
Dinah	Please (finale)
Here lies love	
Please (with Eddie Lang, guitar)	

Obtainable from Sunbeam Records, 13821 Calvert Street, Van Nuys, California, 91401, USA.

****

Following upon last quarter's review of the 'Curtain Calls' releases, the first of these - "DICK TRACY IN 'B' FLAT" - has now been discovered on another label, Scarce Rarities SR 5504. (List price: $5.98; Ray Avery's price: $4.50 plus postage). Details of this 'Command Performance' were given in September's issue of "BING".

****

News of a forthcoming 7-LP set of earlier recordings is to hand, by courtesy of Leslie Gaylor. This extensive album is due for release on the 'World Records' label in April of the new year, and it is known to include songs that have not previously been featured on microgroove. Sleeve notes will be written by Ken Barnes, the producer of Bing's latest recordings for 'United Artists'.

****

Perhaps most exciting of all is the news that Basil Grillo (of the Crosby organisation in Beverly Hills) has at long last secured the release rights of the remaining Bing/Buddy Cole tracks that have so far been unissued commercially. He plans a double-LP release of this excellent material on the United Artists 'Liberty' label. There can be little doubt that, notwithstanding Bing's forthcoming sessions, this is the best news regarding record releases since Pelican and Biograph issued the two 'takes' of "Soft lights and sweet music".

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BERT MORTON (Brewood, Stafford) writes to the Editor: I was fortunate enough to be in the USA at the time when the Bing Crosby CBS 'Special' was televised and I was delighted to see how fit and active Bing appeared. Also, his singing sounded great and he obviously enjoyed being back at work. I'm enclosing some examples of the publicity the show was given.
(EDITOR's reply: I'm most grateful, Bert, for the press clippings, and I know that you'll be interested in Pat Sullivan's fine report of the recording of Bing's 'Special' elsewhere in this issue.)

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CELLULOID CROSBY

by KEITH PARKINSON

Any ideas which Crosby movie has three official titles? It's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court", also registered in the USA as simply "A Connecticut Yankee". It was re-titled "A Yankee in King Arthur's Court" for release in the UK. Oddly enough, the film has an obscure connection with the Warner Brothers film "A Star is Born". When David Selznick wanted to film Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms" for 20th Century Fox, Selznick owned the rights to "A Star is Born" which Warners wanted for Judy Garland. In turn, Warners had acquired the rights to "A Farewell to Arms" in return for "A Connecticut Yankee" when Paramount wanted it as a Crosby vehicle.

It would be wrong to mention David O. Selznick only in passing because he was arguably Hollywood's most talented producer during the film capital's golden years. The 'O' in his name stood for nothing - he introduced it to give his name a greater importance, and after going through the alphabet decided the letter 'O' added the required touch. Best remembered for "Gone With The Wind", I regard "David Copperfield" as my favourite Selznick film. It it obvious from the successes of D.O.S. that he knew the film business inside out and he certainly put his knowledge to good use even when promoting such poor films such as "Desire in the Dust". In the 1920's he used to sell possible film titles to Paramount Pictures for $100 each. Often these titles were traded between one company and another. In 1928 he came up with "High Society" although he had to wait almost 30 years until it was used. Until 1955 to be exact. The year quoted is not a typing error and my memory has not failed me because in April of that year Allied Artists released a film called "High Society" with Leo Gorcey, Huntz Hall and the Bowery Boys. With a running time of 61 minutes it was approximately an hour too long. I know - I sat through it. However, it did preceed the 'real' "High Society" by two years and possibly meant that Selznick made $200 on that title. Selznick was a prolific writer of memos. They provide the perfect self-analysis of a man whose pen overflowed with constructive criticism. His biggest film, "Gone With The Wind", provoked outpourings of memos daily to his staff and his associates. One of the most interesting ones is dated 7th October, 1939, and is addressed to his New York representative. It concerns an argument with MGM about their demand that Clark Gable be given solo billing in "Gone With The Wind". Part of Selznick's memo reads:

> "Personally, I think it is all a lot of nonsense, and I think the smartest actor in the business is Bing Crosby, who, through his entire starring career, has insisted that they co-star somebody, even if it was a bit player, so that he couldn't be blamed alone if the picture failed".

Of course, none of Bing's pictures failed at the Box Office and it is interesting to find that Gable eventually shared equal billing with Vivien Leigh, Leslie Howard and Olivia de Havilland in "G.W.T.W."

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Paramount Pictures had a star for longer than Bing was contracted to that studio. He first appeared in 1933 in "Popeye The Sailor" and lasted until 1957, during which time the studio saw the advantage in allowing him to publicise their other contract players. I well remember Popeye at the North Pole singing "June in January" in a cartoon made in 1934 and called "Shiver Me Timbers". Whether it had its original release with Bing's "Here Is My Heart" I don't know but it was a good plug for the hit song from that film. When "Double Or Nothing" was released in 1937 Dave Fleischer directed a Popeye short based on the song introduced by Bing called "It's The Natural Thing To Do". The film opens with Olive Oyl in the kitchen whilst Popeye and Bluto battle it out in the back yard. A telegram arrives from the Popeye Fan Club, reading "Cut out the rough stuff.... and act more refined....that's the natural thing to do." Popeye and Bluto make an effort to reform but the film ends with a massive brawl, whilst over the soundtrack is played "It's the natural thing to do". In 1954 Paramount released the cartoon "Popeye's 20th Anniversary". Bob Hope hosts a testimonial dinner in the film, which gives Popeye an opportunity to show the assembled guests some film clips from earlier Popeye cartoons. I have a copy of a publicity drawing

from the film which shows Bob Hope presenting Popeye with a cup engraved with the word "Spinach" whilst seated around the table are Olive Oyl, Jerry Lewis, Dean Martin and Bing Crosby, the latter complete with sailor hat, a loud shirt, a pipe and the sleepiest eyes I've ever encountered in a caricature of him. Popeye lives, of course. Independent Television has the rights to the original Paramount shorts and these crop as 'fillers' quite often on Yorkshire Television. Up until a few years ago Granada Television used to show a selection three times a week before the tea-time news. Many's the time my sausage and mash has gone cold!

****

Bing never took film acting too seriously in the 1960's and the present decade found him very couldn't-care-less as far as his appearing in movies was concerned. In the summer of 1973 an interviewer pressed him for comment on his attitude to filming and Bing's reply was: "I couldn't possibly be encouraged to re-make any of my old movies. Especially those "Road To - " films. It'd be very difficult to believe that any of us could even pursue a girl, much less do anything with her if we caught her! Sure I have prints - 16mm ones - of all my old pictures and I run them for the children sometimes at home, or if I happen to be up that late I might catch myself on television in an oldie. I must say, though, I did love the music in those films. It was awfully good."

When Bing's total film output is considered, his stock of Crosby films must take some storing. It's surprising that over the years his fame in Hollywood did not result in any bad publicity. All the major stars had some unsavoury incidents reported which helped to sell newspapers and fan magazines up until the libelous scandals 'disclosed' in "Confidential" in the 1950's. Columnists knew that sensationalism ensured a wider readership than they could hope to find in the reproduction of studio publicity handouts. When an important star led a seemingly normal private existance, gossip columnists would introduce suspect and damaging items based on heresay. As recently as March 1965 Hedda Hopper and publishers Doubleday and Company shared equally an out of court settlement of $100,000 after Hopper cast aspersions to Michael Wilding's manhood in the book "The Whole Truth". One of Hopper's assistants, Spec McClure, related how Bing almost fell foul of Hedda when the gossip columnists were beginning to become powerful in Hollywood:

> "Hopper got the idea Bing Crosby was holed up in the Waldorf with a young actress. Hopper was always protective towards these young girls, afraid they'd get hurt. So she called Ted Saucier, the hotel's press agent, and told him she knew all about it and to have Crosby get in touch with her or she'd blow the whole thing wide open. Crosby wrote her a long, handwritten letter swearing he hadn't done any such thing, so Hopper never printedthe story. Now Crosby is somebody you'd think wouldn't give a damn".

Whilst on the subject of Hedda Hopper and for those readers who are interested in anything and everything remotely associated with Bing, a quote from her book "From Under My Hat":-

> "My dressing room at Metro used to adjoin Joan Crawford's. In the morning she'd be preceded by her maid, who would carry in urns of coffee and turn on a Bing Crosby record. The music would be in full swing when Joan, an avid Crosby fan, made her entrance. The same record would be played a dozen times until she tired of it and the maid switched to another recording - Crosby. I was a Crosby fan myself, but for me the third hearing was sufficient".

Where do Crosby fans come from as well as from the ranks of celebrities? "In fact most of my fan mail comes from England", Bing once told a reporter. "I get more attention in London ". Bing's favourite pipe was bought in England for £1 and now supposedly sells for £5 because the enterprising tobacconist feels justified in charging an extra £4 for "the pipe that Bing Crosby smokes", which sounds like pure fan magazine although it came out in an interview in which Bing spoke about politics. "I only met President Nixon once when we were down in Mexico. I stay away from politics. I leave that to others. Actually my life's rather quiet and I can have privacy".

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Is your favourite Crosby film a typical choice amongst Crosby admirers?
Is there a Crosby film song that is favoured by most readers of "BING"?
When is it generally accepted by Crosby buffs that Bing attained his cinematic peak?
Is there a female co-star from a Crosby film who is liked by the majority of readers?

With a little co-operation we should have the answers to these until now imponderable questions. If readers can find time to complete the questionnaire printed at the foot of this page and mail it to me then I promise to publish the findings in the next but one issue of "BING". The six month time lag should give overseas readers an opportunity to return the form to me in order to include their views in the overall analysis. A good response should reflect in as accurate an indication as is possible of the likes and dislikes of Crosby connoisseurs.

When I make the final count in order to reach a grand total for each question your first choice will count as three points, your second two points and your last one point. This applies to the first two questions. Part two of the form will not figure in the analysis but I will generalise the findings if sufficient people complete the second part of the questionnaire. If you haven't the heart to mutilate your copy of "BING" then write out the answers to the questions on a separate piece of paper. If everyone returns the form then we'll be able to produce some interesting information. Please send your completed questionnaire to:

KEITH PARKINSON
55 LONG RIDGE
RASTRICK, BRIGHOUSE
YORKS. HD6 3RZ.

In a letter to Edward Hale, dated October 23, Bing writes: Thanks for your very kind letter. I remember indeed the episode in London in 1944. I had been doing some shows at the Queensberry Club with Glenn Miller and Brod Crawford, and we were having dinner in a restaurant somewhere in Soho when a crowd gathered and wanted to hear some songs, so I did a few out the window. There was a blackout at the time, as I remember, and the Officer in the area asked me to please ask the people to disperse because of the danger from the bombs. I have plans for some albums soon...we have all the details set...it's just a question of when I can get over....or they may bring the tracks here and I'll record to play-back.

BING CROSBY FILM QUESTIONNAIRE

PART A

1. What is your favourite Bing Crosby film?
   i _____
   ii _____
   iii _____

2. What is your favourite Bing Crosby film song?
   i _____
   ii _____
   iii _____

3. Who is your favourite Bing Crosby co-star?
   Male: _____
   Female: _____

4. Which Bing film disappointed you most? _____

PART B

5. Excluding Bing, who is your favourite actor? _____

6. Who is your favourite actress? _____

7. Are you still a regular picturegoer (12 times a year or more?) YES / NO

DO I HEAR YOU SAYING? Cleverly disguised as Santa, your Editor slides down the chimney clutching his bag of readers' letters received since the last issue of "BING".

JACK DOUGAN (Northern Ireland) writes: Thought the last issue of the magazine was great, and I'm delighted that we can all look forward to a new album from the master. Whilst the re-issues keep many fans happy, a new album is something quite special. As I've never possessed a copy of Bing's autobiography I welcome the new series in Reg's pages of the magazine. I sincerely hope that one day we shall see a re-print of this book. The following item was recently printed in the 'Sunday Mirror'... 'MY PET HATE' (photo of Bing in casual dress, golf club slung across his shoulder): "As an avid golfer, angler and shooter, my most intense dislike is bad weather". The 'Sunday Post' has also been publishing news coverage of Bing, for which it deserves praise. I'm sure that members will recall that Bing was the subject of this paper's 'The Honest Truth' series a few years ago. I'm happy to report that radio, also, still continues to feature Bing regularly, particularly on Terry Wogan's breakfast programme. Thanks are due to our good friend Les Gaylor for getting Bing's records played, many of which occur in Charlie Chester's popular series.

JIM HAYES (Liverpool) writes: Congratulations on "BING"-35 and the supplement. A thought - how many singers, other than Bing, do you know of, who call themselves Bing? Only other known to me is Bing Day, who had a 45-SP issued on Mercury 45AMT 1047, "I can't help it"/"Mama's place", in June 1959! Regarding the query in 'Crosbyography' (last issue), as far as I know, both USA and English 'Reprise' LP's bore the same catalogue numbers, and were issued there and here in the same month. I would guess that the record in question, R6127, should have appeared circa October 1964, but I'm unable to find any trace of either an American or English LP bearing this catalogue number.

MICHAEL CRAMPTON (Leeds) writes: I've looked forward to the 78 listing for some time now and I offer my thanks for your work involved in compiling and presenting it. Regarding your idea of a biographical work on Bing, it might be a good idea to run a long series on each of Bing's years in the magazine. I have in mind a listing of each song recorded together with a general description of his work in that particular year. It would certainly take a long time to complete, at the rate of four issues a year, but it would create a great interest amongst members. The idea comes, of course, from Keith Parkinson's suggestion of a year by year approach to the Bing compendium. In addition to 1975 being the 25th anniversary of the founding of the club, it is also the 10th anniversary of the meetings in Leeds, and my own 20th year of being a member. To mark this occasion I plan a special dinner in Leeds, similar to the occasion of the 15th anniversary. Up until recently, collecting Crosby LP's was a reasonably simple matter but with the appearance of so many 'pirate' and obscure labels, it seems an impossible task trying to keep pace. How do you manage? (EDITOR's comments: Earlier this year I made a serious study of the situation and came to the conclusion that one has to have an exceptionally high income in order to keep pace with the flood of material from the States. The majority of this is of radio origin - either complete shows or 'air shots' lasting but a few moments. Unless your name happens to be 'Bob Roberts' it's wiser to pick and choose from this vast output of pirate material, rather than try and compete with the 'label collectors' in this world.)

RON DANIELS (South Australia) writes: There are a couple of points I would like to comment on in the previous issues of the magazine. Firstly, with reference to the song "Linda", Bing did sing a song of that name on a Philco Show around 1948 or 1949, I believe. I have a tape of songs from Philco shows and this number is included. The second point concerns a letter from Reg Hampton on page 42 of "BING"-34 in Reg's columns. There was a film made in 1937 called "It Happened in Hollywood" starring Richard Dix. For British consumption it was renamed "Once a Hero". It is mentioned in David Shipman's book, 'THE GREAT MOVIE STARS' published by Paul Hamlyn, from which I quote: "...a 'B' movie about a Western star who fails at first in Talkies, but triumphs later. As a gimmick lots of 'doubles' played stars". Unfortunately the book doesn't say who played Bing, or whose voice was used. Perhaps this will jog someone's memory about the picture. Here are a few notes on books that I have acquired recently which

I think might be of interest to members. Firstly, a book entitled 'SOMETIMES I WONDER' by Hoagy Carmichael with Stephen Longstreet. Hoagy writes about the early jazz years and jazz folk he knew and worked with. People like Beiderbecke, Goldkette, Whiteman, the Rhythm Boys, etc. Of particular interest is how he met, and worked with, Bing. The book was first published in 1966 by Alvin Redman, 17 Fleet Street, London, EC4 (Tel: Ludgate Circus 8161). Another recent publication by W. H. Allen (1973) is 'MARION DAVIES' - a biography by Fred Lawrence Gailes. Bing gets quite a mention in the chapter concerning "Going Hollywood" as befits the leading man in the film. There is a wonderful picture of a youthful Bing with Marion singing, "We'll make hay while the sun shines". Another Allen publication is Earl Wilson's 'THE OTHER SIDE OF SHOW BUSINESS'. Wilson was a show business columnist for 30 years and has a fund of stories, many of which have never before been published. Bing gets a couple of mentions. Not the sort of book to leave around for the children, though! Show business folk seem to use a fair smattering of four-letter words! Regarding the 'Memorabilia' records, currently being reviewed in the magazine, there are 30 albums in the series, all consisting of radio shows from the 30's, 40's and 50's, on LP's, cassettes and cartridges. As far as the Bing album is concerned, it does not give value for money - one half-hour Chesterfield Show spread over both sides of the record, i.e. 15 minutes per side. Totem records give us twice the playing time for the same price! Somebody over in the States is cashing in on the Nostalgia thing and trying to make a fast buck! Well, I think that's about it for the time being. All the best from 'down under'.

KEITH HYDE (Victoria, Australia) writes: It may not have been brought to our members' attention that there is currently a world-wide shortage of vinyl, and most 'pirate' labels (and indeed, some commercial companies) are having to resort to using re-claimed vinyl which gives inferior reproduction. "BING" continues to improve with every issue and I loved your recent article, "Have You Got What It Takes?" which was beautifully done! Keep up the great work, pal! Great news about Bing's U.K. recording session and I hear that Ken Barnes is praising Bing to the skies. He claims that the publishers of his book edited out all the good things he said about Bing, and left in all the 'crits'. Could it be that Sinatra is not selling so good? He lost a lot of fans with his disgraceful behaviour on his Aussie tour and his TV Special was very poor. On the first couple of songs he was singing 'flat', off-key and out-of-tune! Naturally he blamed the orchestra....what a bum!

JOHN BIGNELL (Wembley, London) writes: Reg was kind enough to give me a handsome introduction to the 'Magic' circle in the June issue of "BING", and you will have to excuse me for a few months if I raise topics or queries which have been dealt with long ago. I have obtained several back numbers of the magazine and it is fascinating to find that many of the questions I intended to ask have already been answered in these earlier issues. I have been a Crosby addict since 1941 and would have been a member of the Circle since its inception in 1950 if I had taken the trouble to find out if an appreciation society existed. To give you an idea of how I have been groping in the dark, I often imagined a meeting with Bing (everyone has their favourite dreams!) and one of the questions I always intended to put to him was: "Why did you never record the greatest hit of all time, 'Begin The Beguine'?" Of course, the crushing reply would have been, "I did - in 1944!" So you can see the sort of gaps that existed in my data on Crosby by 'going it alone' for so many years. Then again, after collecting several 78's in the late 1940's, I neglected to keep up with the LP issues, and began to seriously collect them only last year. Consequently, my collection consists of about 35 LP's and 20 78's. I am having tremendous difficulty in obtaining many of the LP's issued during the past 15 years - by now I could have had a vast collection. However, I am pleased to report that my collection continues to expand and I find it a good policy to purchase each album as it becomes available in the shops, before it quickly disappears like so many do. Finally, I must congratulate you on the fine quality of the magazine - a much better job than hitherto and much more worthy of the world's number one entertainer of all time.

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All contributions to 'DO I HEAR YOU SAYING' should be addressed to the Editor, John Bassett, "Bingville", 72 Stromness Road, Southend, Essex.

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IDLE THOUGHTS...about a far from idle fella

by STAN AUSTIN

I often wonder whether I should have been born earlier, so as to have experienced the best of the early days. I was born in 1920, so that what little early Crosby we had over here is just a faintly remembered background. Mind you, vague childhood memories are significant - I remember I was given my first steam engine when "Charmaine" was a big hit - I cannot hear that melody now without a huge wave of nostalgia, coupled with the smell of methylated spirit and hot metal!

My first memory of Crosby was at our local 'luxury' cinema. The organist had the bright idea of playing popular records of the day over the sound system of the cinema, and accompanying them on the organ! I haven't the slightest idea what the song was, but it was introduced along the lines of "Sung by one of the Rhythm Boys" - faint though the memory is, it must have been significant to have stuck with an eight or nine-year-old schoolboy, and remember that schoolboys (in those days) weren't normally interested in such things.

To my undying regret, I missed "THE BIG BROADCAST" (I remember though what an enormous hit "Please" was), but my next memory is of "COLLEGE HUMOUR" - but strangely enough, not the film itself, but the trailer. This presented Bing as the greatest wonder of the age - and naively in those days we used to accept trailers on their face value - and my main memory is of Bing sitting 'side saddle' on a balcony rail, presumably singing "Down The Old Ox Road". What particularly struck me was the entirely new approach he brought to cinema singing. Everybody before him had stared straight at the camera, but not Bing - he was either gazing soulfully upwards at 10 o'clock or reflectively downwards at 5 o'clock. This created a brand new feeling of sincerity as opposed to singing a song directly at an audience. I don't know if anyone has investigated this aspect, but has Bing ever stared straight at the camera when singing a song?

I must have been 14 when I saw "SHE LOVES ME NOT", and I vividly recall walking back from the cinema along a dark avenue of tall trees with "Love In Bloom" ringing in my ears. In those days we had little in the way of record programmes on the radio, and our only contact with songs of the day were from the broadcasts made by British dance bands. "Love In Bloom" is a difficult song to sing, if sung in its right key. The beginning of the second phrase ("Oh, no, it isn't a dream...") is somewhat of a strain, but if you overcome this by singing the song in a lower key, the first phrase becomes impossibly low. The dance band vocalists of the time elected to sing it in its right key, thus spoiling a very good song by inevitably straining on the high notes. Then you would hear Bing's version and realise that his was the only way to sing it (afterwards, you would realise that Bing had lowered the key and had altered the first line of the melody to make it easier, but such was his art that you didn't immediately suspect anything!). And this, of course, was the pattern of many years to come - first hearing the dance band vocalists and then hearing Bing, upon which all else that had come before faded away into insignificance. By the time "TWO FOR TONIGHT" had been released, I had begun work and could afford to purchase the commercial recordings made of the film's songs.

It will be seen that my only contact with Bing at this time was with the romantic ballad era, but in later years we have had this glorious surge of re-issues, and we can now study the earlier period with the Whiteman band. We can hear how he brought a new and obviously correct approach to popular singing, and how he was obviously and instinctively steeped in jazz feeling. Once we realise the importance of this jazz approach we can examine his ballad singing and see how he even introduced variations outside the normal tune and timing to the romantic hits of the day. Even today, Bing can hold his own with anyone for timing and approach to a song. Listen to the album "SONGS I WISH I HAD SUNG" for example - each track is given a different approach, and one can play the entire LP without any hint of boredom.

May I conclude with one final thought - these re-issued albums have brought a pleasure to my wife and I which we haven't known for years. It is just like the old days when we could enter a record shop and purchase discs by Bing, Ambrose, Geraldo, the Boswell Sisters, etc. The recent crop of re-issues has enabled to do this yet again - and many of the tunes are 'new' to us. Pleasant though they all are, the early period was overflowing with so many good songs that not all of them could become long-lasting hits.

CROSBYOGRAPHY Discographical Research...

ADLITIONS and AMENDMENTS to the "ENGLISH '78' NUMBERS/TITLES LISTING" distributed with the last issue of this magazine, supplied by Colin Pugh and the Editor.

BRUNSWICK (10")
add:- 01256 Where the blue of the night/Dancing in the dark
01563 I've got to sing a torch song/Down the old ox road
01577 I've got to pass your house/Blue prelude
delete:-
01630 Thanks/The last round-up (Note: This item was never issued)

add the following footnotes:-
(1) Two different issues of 01874 were released, as shown.
(2) Certain copies of 01197 (post-1933 pressing) incorrectly show 1197 on one label.
(3) Certain copies of 01256 (post-1933 pressing) incorrectly show 1256 on one label.
(4) All the following issues were later re-pressed with the black and silver label:- 03699, 03902, 04098, 04581, 04657, 04756, 05173, 05244, 05410. Issues from 05450 onward were black and silver label only.

COLUMBIA (10")
add the following footnote:-
(1) DB1829 was later re-pressed with a black and silver label.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE (10")
add:- B5415 Ooh! Maybe it's you/non-Bing

Amend the 'grand total' of issued 78's to 602 (as shown on the title page).

****

COLIN PUGH has compiled a listing of 78's which were manufactured in this country for sale abroad (to complement those shown on page 12 of the supplement), and these will be printed and distributed with the March 1975 issue of "BING".

****

TOWARD A 'SKELETAL' LISTING OF BING ON ENGLISH 7" 45 rpm **STANDARD** PLAY DISCS
compiled by JIM HAYES

BRUNSWICK
45-03384
45-03929
45-05224
45-05244
45-05269
45-05277
45-05304
45-05315
45-05339
45-05354
45-05377
45-05385
45-05403
45-05404
45-05410
45-05419
45-05430
45-05451
45-05486
45-05501
45-05511
45-05543
45-05558
45-05585
45-05620
45-05674
45-05726
45-05760
45-05764
45-05770
45-05790
45-05840
05928
05934

CAPITOL
45CL 14643
45CL 14645
45CL 14761
CL 15326

DAYBREAK
2111-001
DAS 401
DAS 402

DECCA
45F 21452

GALA
GSP 801

LONDON
45HLR 8504
45HLR 8513
45HLU 8593
45HLD 9228
HLU 10276

MCA
MU 1010
MU 1048
MU 1107
MCA 111

MGM
45MGM 1098
45MGM 1107

PHILIPS
45PB 817
45PB 921

REPRISE
R 20217
R 20352
RS 20645

WARNER BROTHERS
45WB 83

****
* *
* Additions and *
* amendments will *
* be welcomed by *
* JIM HAYES at *
* 161 Bowland *
* Drive, Ford, *
* Liverpool, *
* L21 0JA. *
* *
****

TOWARD A 'SKELETAL' LISTING OF BING ON ENGLISH 7" 45 rpm EXTENDED PLAY DISCS
compiled by JIM HAYES

BRUNSWICK
OE 9003
OE 9009
OE 9010
OE 9027
OE 9069
OE 9070
OE 9103
OE 9291
OE 9292
OE 9293
OE 9353
OE 9359
OE 9362
OE 9366
OE 9367
OE 9368
OE 9409
OE 9410
OE 9415
OE 9423
OE 9424
OE 9466
OE 9467
OE 9469
OE 9472
OE 9473
OE 9504

COLUMBIA
SEG 7522
SEG 7553

FONTANA
TFE 17060
TFE 17061
TFE 17178
TFE 17179
TFE 17186

HMV
7EG 8139
7EG 8219
7EG 8251
7EG 8405
7EG 8475

MGM
MGM EP 762
MGM ES 3515

PHILIPS
BBE 12142

RCA
RCX 152
SEC 7013

REPRISE
R30018
R 30021
R 30025
R 30039
R 30040

WARNER BROTHERS
WEP 6050
WEP 6100
WEP 6103
WSE 6100
WSE 6103

****

AMENDMENT TO THE MINI-DISCOGRAPHY (supplied by Colin Pugh)
19 Sept. 1928 Silent night W98585-3 (not take-1 as printed)

****

COLIN PUGH writes: It seems that my article on 'collecting terminology' has sparked off a wave of enquiries concerning the definition of "Dubbing". The answer is simply this ... A DUBBING IS A NON-MASS-PRODUCED COPY - A 'ONE-OFF' COPY - A NON-COMMERCIAL COPY OF DISC OR TAPE (OR OTHER SOUND MEDIUM), NOT FOR SALE OR DISTRIBUTION IN THE IMMEDIATE DUBBED STATE.

If a record company makes a dubbing it is for the purpose of re-mastering and the resultant pressings are therefore not dubbings. At most they can be described as being taken from a dubbed master. A modern recording is the result of so many transfers and processes - taping, editing, channeling, cutting, mastering, mothering, pressing - that if what I have said above about dubbing is not true, then every finished recording would be a dubbing. This, of course, is not so. To anticipate a question, "are private pressings 'dubbings'?" the answer is still "no".

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A CHRISTMAS STORY

BERT BISHOP casts aside 'Bishop's Bench' this month to present this special festive spine-chiller!

Half concealed by a wooded covert, set back from a Suffolk lane that wandered aimlessly along the border of the Stour valley, a magnificent, rambling Tudor house stood, as it had done for some four hundred years, defiantly facing the fury of a so'westerly gale that was the van to banks of great, grey cloud that loomed ominously on the distant horizon, obscuring the pale luminosity of the rising, near full moon.

Behind the hand-hewn beams, solidly supporting the pink plaster facade, a chink of flickering light filtered through the banging shutters of a lead-glazed window - a solitary sign of cheer. All else remained dark and foreboding. Other windows, set in casual irregularity, remained unlit and sightless; blind to the oncoming storm; unlike the weather-worn chimneys that knew, and played their eerie, moaning overture like giant organ pipes - projecting their weird opus through the yawning apertures of the red-brick chimney pieces set solidly into the walls of the ancient rooms that hid their secrets beneath the mediaeval ambience of the red-tiled, gabled rooftop.

It was Christmas Eve, but 'twas not the sounds of Noel emanating from within the lighted room that echoed through the oak panelled walls. For there the lone occupant, a youngish man, but wise in his ways, sat in his favourite

Victorian armchair, settling even deeper back into the brown leather hide as he listened earnestly to the grandeur of Haydn's Symphony No.8 in G - "La Tempeste" - competing favourably with the natural storm that was brewing outside. He pitched another sticky-barked fir log upon the incandescence glowing fiercly from the fireplace; the log burst into crackling combustion, sending forth a shower of sparks that were instantly sucked up the wide chimney shaft. From a carved mahogany cigar box, that rested upon an inlaid Queen Anne table, he selected a Don Costello, lit it, and inhaled the curling, grey smoke; enjoying the infrequent pleasure of the rolled Concordian tobacco leaf that he reserved for special occasions.

As he leaned back, resting his head upon the hand-embroidered antimacassar, his gaze fell upon the scenic tranquility of a Constable original that graced the inner west wing wall. It depicted a nearby corner of the English countryside, and in his mind's eye he wandered the paths of the rural, summer scene - there illustrated with such profound simplicity as to conceal the inherent artistry of its low key brushwork. His musings were interrupted by the climatic conclusion of Haydn's work, and he reached across to lovingly lift his precious recording from the Edison phonograph, looking, contradictingly, gracefully cumbersome with its horn blossoming like some giant bindweed bloom.

Later that evening he was expecting a friend to visit him - a short, stocky fellow, who just recently had suffered fitful bouts of depression: but he anticipated that he would be in a happy frame of mind this festive night; and he, himself, was determined to bring him cheer whether or no. Their musical tastes were liberal and ran practically parallel; spanning the centuries of classics to the era of the intimacy of the crooners and balladeers. However, on one aspect they amicably differed; each holding his own counsel as to who was the greatest and most popular singer of all time - Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra. His friend was a Sinatra supporter, whilst he quite positively preferred the musically mellifluous Mr. C.

Usually, he and his friend would adjourn to the cellar of the old house wherein he had set up a private museum of early cinematographic and phonographic equipment. There they would play and discuss vintage recordings, or watch the spools and sprockets of a Biograph digest and project the flickering images of a silent 'movie' on to a pearl white screen. A modest sound projector stood alongside for viewing films more contemporary to their years: currently inoperative because of a jammed film-gate. But this did not concern them unduly for their hobby collections were so vast that an entire evening might be spent comparing the alternate takes of just one recording, or watching the humorously deadpan Harry Langdon fall victim to the traps that await the unwary within the celluloid world.

His friend had promised to arrive promptly at 8 o'clock; plenty of time therefore to partake of the snack which his housekeeper had been advised to prepare for him. He rose from his chair and tugged lightly on the corded bell-pull, silent within the lounge, but proclaiming his summons within the kitchen. Whilst he awaited the arrival of his housekeeper with his refreshment he slipped open the wrapper of a vintage record magazine in which there was featured an article he had written: a thesis on the chronological aspect of matrix numbers and variant takes. To his chagrin he discovered that his name had been miss-spelt and that an entire column of matrices were transposed out of sequence. It fell upon him to write at once to the editor of this otherwise worthy periodical, but then remembered that there would be no postal collection nor delivery the following day, a fact that in itself put him in further ill-humour, for if there was one thing that he pleasurably anticipated it was his regular morning mail. Determined not to let this unfortunate episode spoil his enjoyment of Christmas and the prospect of a convivial evening, he turned his attention to other matters. Outside, the weather had worsened - quite unseasonal, he thought - idly dreaming of the traditional white Christmas as depicted on the numerous greetings cards that bedecked the exquisite Sheraton sideboard that stood against a tapestry hung wall.

Browsing along an open bookshelf - dusty with smoke soot and fire-ash - he selected for some light reading an Agatha Christie thriller: "Hercule Poirot's Christmas". It seemed a suitable choice to while away an hour or so. In the corner of the large lounge an ornate grandfather clock chimed the quarter hours as he read; its tick-tock drowned by the howling gale. The fire was well stacked, and, buried, as he was, deep in the leather arm-chair, he became almost hypnotic-

ally immersed in the murder mystery; blissfully warm and only faintly conscious of the fury of the night.

The next thing he became aware of was the clock striking a quarter-to-nine. He looked in surprise and momentary disbelief at the painted moon rising upon its face, indicating the advanced hour; for his friend was always on time; indeed, both made a point of punctuality in their habits. Just at that moment the front door bell clanged its strident note. He went through to the hall and opened the door, the wind swirling into the room as if to take possession like some fiendish spirit. There stood his friend, desperately clutching some packages that would have otherwise been torn from his grasp by the increasing gale. As he bade him enter he became aware that his friend had been drinking excessively. This, then, accounted for his lateness, for neither of them normally imdided to any great degree: a doubly, almost unforgiveable indiscretion.

"You'd better come in", he said, stoically refraining from admonishing his friend's discourteous lapse. But as they passed through into the lounge, it became clear that his friend was also in an aggressive mood - a side of his character that was new, and quite alien, to his host. With each passing minute the, by now, unwelcome visitor became more abusive. Deliberately knocking aside a previously unmarked Chippendale chair that he had been invited to sit on, he he began to make disparaging comments on the collection of early Crosby HMV and Victor recordings carefully stored within a glass-fronted cabinet, which was the pride and joy of his host. He ranted on about Crosby being a second-rate Rudy Vallee, a no-good has-been, and that Frank Sinatra had always out-sung, out-acted and out-performed "old boo-boo-boo". Picking up an elegant Georgian silver coffee-pot he lunged toward the cabinet and made to strike at the diamond shaped inset glass doors. Until now his host had tried to reason with him and pacify him, ignoring his outrageous behaviour: but this was the last straw!

Grabbing his now unwelcome guest with both hands and propelling him toward the front door, he managed to open it; and to the gargantuan roar of Thor, the great god of thunder, he unceremoniously ejected him into the crescendo of the night. Suddenly, he espied on the hall-stand the Christmas present that he had bought for his 'friend'. It was a privately pressed acetate disc. Picking it up, he tore the festive wrapper from and read again: "Sinatra's Farewell Performance". Very appropriate, he thought, and hurled this well-chosen gift at the departing figure. The vinyl-coated steel disc curled away into the teeth of the gale and, with an accuracy that would have done credit to Auric Goldfinger's manservant, 'Oddjob', struck down the unfortunate recipient with its fatal blow. At that same moment the heavens rent apart: an ear-splitting crack of thunder instantly releasing a zig-zagging shaft of lightning that seemed to strike at the very roots of the old house.

Everything appeared to be in utter confusion, and with palpitating heart he struggled to re-orientate himself. He became aware of a hand on his shoulder; it was his housekeeper: "You alright, sir? You must have dozed off - storm's dead overhead now - soon be passed". He sat up, perspiring and faintly trembling. The Christie novel had slipped to the floor - across the room the minute hand of the grandfather clock inched a fraction nearer 8 p.m. Breathing deeply he slowly broke the spell of the ghastly nightmare that had seemed so terrifyingly real. His housekeeper was arranging a pot of coffee, two cups and a plate of piping hot mince pies, upon a low, refectory table: "Your friend'll be here any minute - I'll be off as soon as the worst of the storm's gone over. Merry Christmas, sir". She departed down the long passageway to the culinary quarters.

Relief flooded back into him; and with the realisation of it being Christmas Eve, combined with the imminent arrival of his friend, a contented inner glow pervaded his being. To express his happy mood in music he reached across for the Bing Crosby recording that bore the matrix, L 3028 - he knew them off by heart - and lowered the fine tone needle of the pick-up into the lead-in groove. Whilst the seasonal dissertation was playing the clock struck the hour of eight: he listened for the clapper chime of the front door bell, but all was silent from that quarter. The large hand of the clock jumped from minute to minute; seemingly faster with every one. He went to the door of the lounge and listened again for the bell; and again it didn't ring. He looked intently at the heavy door that acted as a bastion to the outside world, and in that moment the vision of the latter part of his dream flashed upon his inner eye like a horror film clip -

A stupefying compulsion carried him to the door; he slipped the latch and eased it open. The gusting wind rocked him back on his heels but he walked out into the blackness of the night, and slowly on down the drive. An occasional distant lightning flash threw grotesque shadows of the barren beech tree branches that stretched out like grasping tendrils as if to grab him, and in a cold sweat he hurried on until he reached the wrought-iron gate entrance - there was no one to be seen in any direction. He trod the gravel path back, pushed open the door, entered the hall, and thence the lounge. It was then that he heard it. Faint at first, but then louder as the chimney chorus faded momentarily. It was music, and a voice, and as it echoed along the panelled walls it seemed to be floating up from the very bowels of the old house. It could only be coming from down in the cellar, he thought.... surely his housekeeper had not had the temerity to enter that inner sanctum; forbidden to all but he and his special guests! But nevertheless, that was the source of the sound, and someone, or something, must be down there.

The door to the cellar was partially open, and he went through to where an old enamelled ceiling light shade cast a dim, yellow light upon the worn stone steps. He descended with some diffidence: above the hammering of his heart he was virtually unaware of the voice that drifted up from below. The cellar was L-shaped, and from the foot of the stairs it was possible to see only the far end wall - the wall on which the pearl white screen was hung, and upon which could now be seen alternating one-second flashes of light and dark. At each flash there came the silhouette of the figure of a man: an inconstant image that blended into one continuous impression of the unmistakable outline of his friend, stretched up high, a chair at the very tip of his toes. He froze in terror at the sight, and it was then that he realised that the song, still filling the room, was, "I Did It My Way".

Breaking the spell that gripped him he rushed round to the concealed part of the cellar to where the dreadful apparition emanated. He was confronted by the bulky figure of his friend grinning down at him. "Just fixed the sound projector - plugged it in to that light socket", his friend said. "Got a special treat for tonight - HIGH SOCIETY!" He stepped down from the chair and continued speaking: "I say, I hope you don't mind my coming in? Was a bit late because my car broke down - I cut through the back spinney - came in that way. I noticed the door was on the latch so I let myself in - saw my Christmas present in the hall and was just playing it - thanks, it's great! I thought you'd run your housekeeper home because of the storm. Hey! Are you alright? You look as if you'd seen a ghost!"

His host took the present that was being proffered to him in silence. He opened it. It was the double-LP soundtrack album, "THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT". He looked up from this welcome Christmas gift, smiled at his friend, and murmured almost to himself: "Well, did you evah?"

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"THE 'BING' TAPE SERVICE" Operating in conjunction with the ICC, the "BING" Tape Service provides members with the opportunity of acquiring high quality tapes of virtually anything or ever sung or spoken by Bing Crosby into a microphone during the course of his 48 year old show business career. As we are all aware, strict legal copyright clauses appertain to private tape recording (for obvious reasons) but these special facilities are available via the ICC without offence to anyone. A list of material available on tape would fill more than 12 copies of "BING", but we guarantee that if Bing Crosby has either sung, spoken, coughed or sneezed into a microphone at any time since 1926, a dubbing can be yours at a reasonable price.

All tape is fully guaranteed and recorded dual-track at 3¾, 7½ or 15 i.p.s. on open reel to suit the facilities of members. Delivery is usually within 21 days of receipt of order and payment.

In future, all material currently available on open reel tapes will also be made available on cassettes (C 60 variety) at the usual competitive prices.

For further information, send a stamped S.A.E. to:

BOB ROBERTS (ICC Publicity Officer)
56 Thorold Road
Chatham
Kent.

CHRISTMAS CROSBY SHOPPE

FREE advertising for members wishing to buy, sell or exchange items of Crosbyana. Send your advertisements to the Editor at "Bingville".

WANTED: BING-9 "ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE" and MGM 45 'single', "The Second Time Around"/"Incurably Romantic". Please write to John Ewens, 36 Southview Drive, Upminster, Essex.

THE CREMO DIRECTORY - published by Larry Kiner, 7554 132nd Avenue, N.E., Kirkland, Washington, 98033, USA - contains full details of all Bing's radio broadcasts for Cremo Cigars. The price is $2.50 per copy (UK equivalent approximately £1 but check with your bank first). Please mention this magazine when writing.

SPECIAL ICC SERVICE: Edward Hale announces that he has the facilities to play and tape-record transcription records up to 24" in diameter. Members wishing to take advantage of this service are asked to contact Edward at 48 Highbury Hill, London, N5 1AP. (SAE appreciated).

THE OFFICIAL ICC TAPE: A special collection of Bing's personal spoken messages to the International Crosby Circle, available on tape from the Editor. Price £1.10p. (including postage and packing). Tape is recorded dual-track at 3¾ i.p.s. on open reel, although cassettes can be supplied by special arrangement. Refer to page 14 of "BING"-32 for full details.

CLUB CROSBY: All ICC members are invited to join our affiliated society, the American Club Crosby (founded in 1937). Dues are $2.50 a year which include subscription to the bi-annual club magazine, "BING-GANG" . For further information, write to Miss Pat Sullivan (President), 1301 Sheridan Avenue, No. 96, Chico, California 95926, USA. Please mention "BING" magazine when writing.

FOR SALE: 6-LP Longines Symphonette Society's "THOSE MEMORY YEARS" containing three Bing tracks as detailed within the LP-OGRAPHY. New condition. £5 (including postage and packing). First come, first served! Write to the Editor.

Available to ICC members only:

CLUB TIES in navy blue and of the finest possible quality, worn by the Editor and hundreds of members at many public functions. £1.00 each

CLUB CAR BADGES for either grille or bar fitting - please state your requirements. £2.75 each

CLUB BLAZER BADGES with either blue or black background. £3.75 each

Each item bears the special full-colour emblem designed for the ICC. Prices quoted above include postage and packing, and eight weeks should be allowed for delivery. Cash with order, please, to RON BAXTER, 24 ROPERGATE, PONTEFRACT, YORKS, ENGLAND. (Telephone 2351).

TAPE CROSBY: Operating as an independent feature of this magazine, "TAPE CROSBY" consists of a frequently-changing taped 'programme' of records and discussion which circulates regularly amongst a limited number of ICC members. Interested applicants are advised that there is currently a waiting list, but letters of enquiry will be welcomed by FRED REYNOLDS at 69 Heathmere Avenue, Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RQ.

WANTED: The following non-Bing items are required by the Editor: Capitol LP's LCT 6130 ("Close To You"), LCT 6144 ("A Jolly Christmas") and W 587 ("Swing Easy & Songs For Young Lovers") - all Sinatra albums. Please send details of prices and conditions to John Bassett, "Bingville", 72 Stromness Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 4JQ.

WANTED: Record sales lists for publication in 'CROSBY SHOPPE'. Full details of labels, titles, conditions and prices should be clearly indicated in your advertisement 'copy'. Extensive auction lists cannot be accepted - sorry!

NOTES FROM A NEWCOMER by JOHN BIGNELL

The June issue of "BING" confirmed my original impression that here is the publication no Crosby fanatic can be without. Beautifully produced and packed with really fascinating articles on the subject so dear to our hearts! Now I know what I have been missing all these years (a devotee since 1941 and unaware of the existence of the ICC). I wonder how many other despairing refugees from the monstrous offerings of the current 'pop' scene would join our ranks if they knew what a wonderful vein of sanity still exists in the mad, sad world of modern 'music'.

A stimulating exchange of correspondence with Reg Bristo has, in a few short months, increased my already firm addiction to Crosbyana to an obsessive desire to obtain so many of those LP's which have now, sadly, become almost unobtainable. Reg was kind enough to list my 'wants' in the June issue and as a result I had an immediate response with a very thoughtful telephone call from another new member, Miss Pat Forster of Twickenham. She put me on to the Harlequin Record Shop in London for the "BING CROSBY STORY, Vol.1" double LP set. What a pity that Volume 2 of this album has apparently been abandoned, although the "BING CROSBY IN HOLLYWOOD, 1930-34" album continues the story film-wise, a Volume 2 album could have contained so many of the wonderful early 30's records such as "Love, You Funny Thing", "Shadows On The Window", "Linger A Little Longer In The Twilight", "It's Within Your Power" and many, many more, all of which are non-film recordings and virtually unobtainable on current albums.

Reverting to my published list of requirements, I must give an unsolicited 'plug' to the Swing Shop, Streatham. These people have been most helpful, providing me with many of my 'wants'. Currently, I have had little success in trying to obtain "OLD MASTERS, Vol.2" (AH 17). Can anyone help?

Regarding the double LP set, "THE BEST OF BING" as reviewed by Bert Bishop in issue 34, can anyone tell me which recording of "White Christmas" this is - 1942 or 1947 - I suspect the latter but await confirmation. Also, perhaps more difficult, which recording of "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral" is featured - 1944 or 1945? Whilst on the subject of 'wants', can any member advise me if the following albums are still available? - "BING IN PARIS" (AH 122), "BELOVED HYMNS" (AH 145), "BING - RARE STYLE" (AH 164) and "BING SINGS FOR CHILDREN" (AH 139). The names and addresses of stockists would be most welcome.

Confirming some of Reg Bristo's opinions on the Totem LP "BING CROSBY ON THE AIR", I have this album and it really makes fascinating listening. I particularly liked the Kraft Music Hall selections and the two numbers never commercially recorded by Bing, "I Simply Adore You" and "Smiles". What a fine job he makes of these. His voice is in such tremendous form that one is tempted to name this period (late 1937, early 1938) as being the zenith of Bing's powers - that is, until one hears again some early 30's recordings! As a matter of interest, the latter title, "Smiles", was a hit tune of 1921, but Bing's 1937 radio version makes it sound entirely different. Regarding the Cremo selections from 1931, I was surprised that the sequence was not re-arranged. The third song, "I Cried For You", should have concluded the session with the announcer bidding us goodnight. The last song, however, comes in and ends very abruptly. This one should have been placed first, especially as it is immediately preceded by Bing crooning his signature tune. A rather unimaginative piece of editing here! A further Totem LP, "SHE LOVES ME NOT", is a radio show based on the film of the same name. It provides an hour of fascinating listening, and the prologue by Cecil B.De Mille is a gem! The record beats any current TV show for an evening's enjoyment, and Bing is in particularly fine voice - dare I suggest that his rendering of the familiar songs is superior to the commercial recordings?

Incidentally, like so many of the members, my wife does not share my complete and life-long devotion to Crosbyana, but she did enjoy these radio shows!

LATE ADDITIONS TO "CHRISTMAS CROSBY SHOPPE"...

WANTED: Quad size film poster of Bing's 1966 movie, "STAGECOACH". Good price paid. Please write to Lee Argent, 365 Somercotes, Laindon, Basildon, Essex.

WANTED: "THE JAZZIN' BING CROSBY" (Joker SM-3053), "THE GREAT VOCALISTS" (Joker SM-3278), "PAUL WHITEMAN ORCHESTRA - 1928" (Family DP-660) and "HARLEM SPEAKS" (Family DP-715). Please write to F. B. Wiggins, American Embassy, P.O. Box 535, Valletta, Malta.

BING ON THE BOX

by BERT BISHOP

Only one Bing film has been presented on television in the London region since I last attended these columns - "ROAD TO RIO" - and that, disappointingly, had a weekday morning screening. Thus, your 'umble reviewer was unable to see again this, the fifth, film in the world famous series of musical hokum.

Perhaps not the best of the Paramount made 'Roads', it nevertheless had some very funny moments, not the least of which is the duelling scene in which the entranced heroes become embroiled. Two memorable commercially recorded duets with the Andrews Sisters, "Apalachicola, FLA" (duetted with Bob Hope in the film) and "You Don't Have To Know The Language", resulted, as well as that delightful ballad, "But Beautiful". Despite Bing's romantic attentions it is Bob Hope who 'gets the girl' in the end, for the second consecutive film marrying 'Dottie' Lamour in each of their respective roles.

On the 4th September, Radio-4 presented, at 7.30 p.m. for 45 minutes a programme entitled "CELEBRATION". It began: "Hello! I'm Ray More, and tonight join me in celebrating - Bing!" There followed the 1954 version of 'Old Blue'. Bing's Irish fans - outnumbered by the American Irish - were the first mentioned by way of song, with the playing of "Harrigan". From there on, Bing's early life was unfolded by an accurate and considered look at his parents and his most famous brothers. The influence of his schooling by Jesuit priests was then reflected in his temporal type-casting as Father O'Malley in the two films, "GOING MY WAY" and "BELLS OF ST.MARY'S" and the title tune of the latter was given a partial airing.

The pattern of events unfolded quickly into the Whiteman days by the playing of "Mississippi Mud" which he recorded in 1928 with Irene Taylor and five singing members of the Whiteman band. The early influence of those jazz days was shown to have lingered on by featuring the '56 classic, "Now You Has Jazz".

Bing's partners over the years were stated as being "as long as your arm and twice as distinguished...you always hear something more than just a fine professional performance; there is invariably an overtone of genuine warmth and friendliness between Bing and his partner." Anne Shelton related her well-known anecdote of their meeting, and the even more BBC-featured duet of theirs was then played - "Easter Parade", from the Services Club in London. "Instant friendship" was the keynote, it was suggested. Bob Hope, and, inevitably, "Put It There, Pal", were then introduced into the proceedings, and a re-play of Bob's line, "You've got that something in your voice so right for selling cheese" led into Bing's Kraft Music Hall career and his inovation of pre-recording on tape.

Then, Bing's hobbies, almost full-time occupation it was suggested: and the rarely played "Where The Turf Meets The Surf". His business-like approach to golf and the charities that benefit were duly recognised - "Straight Down The Middle".

The ICC was then mentioned by acknowledgement of the loan of Pam Corrigan's recording of "It's Crosby, Who Else Could It Be?" The whole tradition of songs about Bing were noted, and Kitty Master's "My Kid's A Crooner" and Dean Martin's "If I Could Sing Like Bing" proved the point. But nobody could put over "White Christmas" like Bing does, said More, and the '55 CBS broadcast version was then played. "Not even the Beatles can get near that (record sales) but Bing can get near the Beatles", and by way of illustration: "Hey Jude". This was followed by the fluffed "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams"; edited for religious propriety.

Bing the family man, and "A Fine Romance" with Dixie Lee, which was followed by Philip's version of 'Old Blue' (the rock 'n' rock joke!) - and Bing's duet with Gary: "When You And I Were Young, Maggie, Blues".

"A big swinging ending to this programme" with Bing 'n' Basie's "Gonna Build A Mountain". The programme was arranged by Frank Dixon.

"CROSBY SHOPPE" LATE ADDITION: The following LP's are required by John Bignell, 21 St.Andrew's Avenue, Wembley; (Tel: 904-2539):- "BING'S HOLLYWOOD", 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 15. LAT 8106, 8154, 8217, 8253, 9278, 8281, 8331 and 8334. Raretone RTR 24004 and 24008. RCA-Victor RD 27196/7. Reprise R2021, R5031 and R6106. Ace Of Hearts AH 17, 136 and 139. Stateside SL 10257. Warner Bros. WM4034, 4016, 8122 and WL 8136. Reprise 45 'SP's: J.4257/8 and K.6244/47. Please state prices and conditions. (EDITOR's P.S. - John is a new member, so please try and help him with the above 'wants' - nearly all of which have now been deleted from the catalogues).

BING TOPICS FROM HULL - or High Water! by ALF FARROW

Since I last sat down to type my topics, I have had a very interesting tape from Frank Murphy. He featured some very listenable items from radio interviews that he has conducted on Radio Tyneside (or was it BBC, Frank?). To highlight the tape, Frank included a telephone link with Bing in San Francisco which he was instrumental in organising last Christmas eve. Every hospital in the Newcastle area was linked to this call and it came over very good. Bing was in excellent voice and he talked to several notable BBC people in the Northeast. We little knew then that just one week later Bing would be in hospital himself, but happily he is now back to normal!

During that telephone link-up, the announcer asked Bing if would like to talk to Mike and George - two top BBC people in the area. Bing greeted Mike with "Ah! Howdy Mike!" Typical? A great ten minutes, believe me!

Vera Lynn often gives me the impression that she is a Bing fan because in two or three of her shows I have heard her sing a good number of Bing's hits, including a wonderful rendering of "It's Easy To Remember" with Roger Webb at the piano. Incidentally, Vera was an Honorary Member of the Original Bing Crosby Friendship Club in 1939, of which I was the secretary. And so was Denny Dennis whom I met in the studios of Radio Humberside some time ago, and we had quite a long chat about Bing, and Denny's own career in America.

As you may well know, the three of us in Hull (Frank Briggs, Vic Gilmore and yours truly) meet at my home nearly every Wednesday night for some very interesting discussions about Bing and others from the world of popular music. We also listen to tapes of radio shows which feature Bing, such as "From Ragtime To Rock and Roll" and "The Song Stylists", and you would be surprised how quickly two-and-a-half hours can fly, at the end of which Vic has to beetle off for his bus home!

One last word to Peter Diffley and Reg Bristo! Not wishing to discredit Perry Como's out-of-this-world recordings of late, may I suggest that for a soothing experience they should listen to Bing singing "Memories" or "Aloha Means I Love You". 'Nuff said!

Until the March issue, I'll sign off by wishing all members a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

EDWARD HALE writes: Now that Bing is 'back on the ball', we can all look forward to a very merry Christmas, and as it is obvious that he hasn't stopped thinking about us, perhaps we can expect a few songs in the near future. I suggest that "When you trim your Christmas tree", don't forget to make a special wish for a "Little ol' tune" from our Hon. Secretary, Bing Crosby, for once again our "Christmas star" shines brighter than before. I would like to offer my best wishes to you all for a happy Christmas, and I take this opportunity of giving you all a "Christmas toast" - to Bing.

QUERY CORNER

Your Editor was recently studying a 1972 edition of "CLUB INTERNATIONAL" (we all have our vices!) and I happened to arrive at a full-colour section showing a naked young lady posing before an array of pre-war bric-a-brac. Posters of Jack Dempsey, stuffed birds and china dolls were in abundance, but what particularly caught my eye (apart from the girl) was a photograph of Bing hanging from the wall against which the 'memorabilia' was attractively displayed. Although the printed size of the picture was extremely small, the pose and handwritten signature in white ink were easily recognisable and I recalled that this was the photograph used on the cover of our 1968 Mini-Discography (first edition). But wait a while! In this miniaturised version, Bing is shown wearing a dark jacket with pocket handkerchief, white shirt and bow tie, as opposed to the open-neck short-sleeve sports shirt in our Discography cover picture! There can be no doubt that the pictures were taken at the same session, but the question arises - did Bing change his attire for two identically-posed photographs (and if so, why?), or has the formal evening dress shown in the magazine version been superimposed over the original sports shirt? The mind boggles!

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DISCOGRAPHIES by the EDITOR

It is not widely appreciated that the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, in 1963 and 1965, printed and published the now out-of-print "Road To Bing Crosby" Discography, Parts 1, 2 and 3, and the 'V'-Disc Supplement. In those days, of course, the ICC was still officially known as the BRITISH BING CLUB, its name being changed by Frank Murphy in the latter part of '65.

The Discography and Supplement were the result of considerable research on the part of an eminent team of compilers - all ICC members and all 'household names' - Bob Roberts, Ralph Harding, Fred Reynolds and Derek Parkes.

In 1965, Ralph Harding organised a 'breakaway' society and introduced a rival magazine to "BING" which subsequently ceased publication, Christmas 1972. His decision to issue part 4 of the Discography under the wing of his own group inadvertently created the present-day misunderstanding that the entire project was the work of his own society.

ICC member, Kenneth E. Gray (USA) has spent the last few years gradually revising the 4-part Discography, page by page - a mammoth task for which he isn't envied! The eventual appearance of an updated 'Road' will answer the prayers of many members in both the ICC and our affiliated society, the American Club Crosby.

In addition to this, your Editor has recently been corresponding with our Publicity Officer, Bob Roberts, regarding the possibility of re-printing the 'V'-Disc Supplement. Bob imparts the welcome news that it his intention to revise this in due course, but first will come a listing of Bing's non-commercial recordings which I know Bob has been working on for many years. This aspect of Bing's vocal output has never before been committed to print, and I can personally guarantee that Bob's efforts will win the priase of every collector reading this magazine.

The success of these and other projects can be summed up in two words - team-work - and as a prelude to our special 25th Anniversary issue in March, the following tabulation identifies those who have contributed to the various discographical projects since the formation of our society.

1950 Formation of the BRITISH BING CLUB.
Files maintained by Leslie Gaylor covering 90% of Bing's commercial output.

1951 Re-named the BRITISH CROSBY SOCIETY.

1963 Publication of "THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY" Discography (Part 1) and the 'V'-DISC Supplement.
Compiled by: BOB ROBERTS
RALPH HARDING
FRED REYNOLDS
DEREK PARKES

1965 Re-named the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE.

1965 Publication of "THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY" Discography (Parts 2 & 3)

1968 Publication of "THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY" (First edition)
Compiled by: FRANK MURPHY
JEAN-PAUL FREREAULT
(Based on Leslie Gaylor's original files, together with information supplied by Decca Records and the Crosby Office)

1971 Publication of "THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY" (First edition)
Compiled by: BERT BISHOP
JOHN BASSETT

1972 Publication of "THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY" (First edition)
Compiled by: JOHN BASSETT
BERT BISHOP

1974 Publication of "THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY" (Second edition)
Compiled by: LESLIE GAYLOR
JOHN BASSETT
BERT BISHOP

1974 Publication of "AN ENGLISH '78' NUMBERS/TITLES LISTING" (Supplement)
Compiled by: JIM HAYES
BERT BISHOP

What does the future hold in store? A brief glimpse at the publications which are in the pipeline appears overleaf...

THE FUTURE...

Publication of a revised "ROAD TO BING CROSBY" Discography and 'V'-DISC Supplement
Compiled by: KENNETH E. GRAY
BOB ROBERTS
RALPH HARDING
FRED REYNOLDS

Publication of "NON-COMMERCIAL DISCOGRAPHY" (First edition)
Compiled by: BOB ROBERTS

Publication of "THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY" (Second edition)
Compiled by: JOHN BASSETT
COLIN PUGH
KENNETH E. GRAY
RON DANIELS
BERT BISHOP

It is worth recording here the publications issued by the now defunct INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF CROSBY COLLECTORS...

1965 Publication of "THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY" Discography (Part 4)
Compiled by: BOB ROBERTS
RALPH HARDING
FRED REYNOLDS
LES PHYTHIAN
GEOFF MILNE

1971 Publication of "THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD" (The Bing Crosby Films Book)
Compiled by: BOB ROBERTS
RALPH HARDING
FRED REYNOLDS
LES PHYTHIAN

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The special March 1975 edition of "BING" will give a greater insight into the 'workings' of our organisation, with personal reminiscences from Alf Farrow, Leslie Gaylor and former secretary & editor, Frank Murphy. Be sure not to miss it!

THE GUNN REPORT - an ideal stocking filler! Many hundreds of 78's and occasional LP's for sale in each issue, including JAZZ, DANCE BANDS, BRASS BANDS, BING, VOCAL, PERSONALITY, LIGHT ORCHESTRAL, ORGAN, etc. In addition there are well-written articles and discographical information...all presented in an inimitable and light-hearted style. Accept a FREE SAMPLE COPY and full details of subscription rates by writing to JOHN GUNN, 15 LYNTON ROAD, HADLEIGH, BENFLEET, ESSEX. Please mention "BING" magazine and wish him a happy Christmas!

THREE VERY IMPORTANT ICC PUBLICATIONS (available now) CASH WITH ORDER to REG BRISTO

1 "THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY" (Second edition)
Every member has the opportunity to acquire a completely revised and up-dated discography showing each title in order of recording, along with matrix and 'take' numbers and supplementary information.
Over 40 pages. 45 PENCE (POST PAID)

2 "THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY" (First edition)
The first of its kind issued to Crosby collectors, consisting of a representative listing of Bing's LP's released between the early 1950's and Christmas 1973. Re-issues and overseas equivalents are all cross-referenced.
Over 80 pages. £1 (POST PAID)

3 "THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY" (First edition)
Every commercially issued title in alphabetical order, along with vocal and musical accompanists. £1 (POST PAID)

N° 36
BUNG
LEEDS!
DEAR LESLIE!
Smiles from
CALL ME LUCKY
N° 3
ON THE AIR!
HERE'S REC V
BRISTO —— THAT IS!!!
ONE DISC
SPECIAL! FROM AMERICA !

HEIGHO!

IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME AGAIN! It really IS Christmas time again. Unbelievably.... seems no time at all since we were working on last year's Yuletide issue - and it's not a sign that ol' Reg is getting old..... Well, not too old, for John Bassett said precisely the same thing way back when we were exchanging letters about this issue. I think that was the day after the last issue went out! And assuredly John isn't anywhere near old - by about 50 years I would say. But the way the year passes...no wonder readers blink their eyes in disbelief when they get their subs reminders! But, to the devil with subs - I'll have another rum and black, and make it a BIG one....and let's have another log on the fire before those lovely red embers collapse in grey dust...let's see those sparks flying up the chimney; and while you're about it, turn the volume up a bit and to hades with the neighbours! Like I said, its Christmas time again.....and anyway, who is gonna object to Bing singing his beautiful "Silent Night" again?

Yes my friends of Crosbyana, we've got the old Christmas cordiality flowing; to prove it I'm not even going to say an unkind word about u-know-who - ol' brown eyes; sorry, that should be blue eyes. Mind you, I'm not going to say any kind ones either, especially after the report I had sent me from the States concern- that singer's latest TV appearance there. All I will say is that if things like I read had been written about our Bing I would put my head in the gas oven - if I can get the turkey to move over! Turkey? As I write, it looks as if HP will be needed to get the STUFFING this year..... Stuffing - that reminds me about.....no, NO, I said no unkind words.

You know, I'm going to get the PICKWICK PAPERS out again tonight: I find them, with A CHRISTMAS CAROL, quite unsurpassed in getting me in the right spirit... let's forget about "economic crisis" as we revel in Scrooge's change of heart... the punchbowl, Mr. Pickwick - that wonderful character, Sam Veller, sorry, Sam WELLER....the coach and horses....let's try and forget the price of petrol, and most other things, the past year especially (except those three days on which you received BING, or your wife bought you that new album on your birth-day)....hang on a minute, got to turn those chestnuts round; they're getting burned on one side.....this rum's GOOD (no, not too much blackcurrant please)

But what a year it has been? A year never known before in Crosbyana, alto-gether apart from the fact that it was the only year known as "1974". It began in heart-stopping fashion, you will so readily recall, with the news of Bing's serious illness...and we won't go over that again - its one of the things to try and forget about the past year except, of course, the gigantic sigh of relief and thankfulness that went up, seemingly, all over the world when it was subsequently learned that Bing was recovering....not only recovering but singing and performing again. Little short of a miracle and certainly the best thing about 1974 if it is to be remembered.....

Wait a minute though, I'm exaggerating again as usual! There are other good things about the year drawing to its close - the imaginative way in which, for instance, EMI/MCA got the stereo'd version of the renamed WHITE CHRISTMAS album in the shops right at the start of October. Actually, I saw it on my way to Leeds on October 5th. I think it beat even the first departmental store "Father Christmas"! And the way they come earlier each year it won't be long before these venerable figures are arriving with what used to be August Bank Holiday!

And this album was in a simple yet arresting garb this time. A real eye-catcher. I feel it safe to assume that the already astronomic sales of White Christmas must have taken another big upward jump this year. It was certainly given the chance this year thanks to EMI/MCA foresight.....and now we have the monumental autobiography set reissued in its most inexpensive form so far. I'm beginning to think 1974 wasn't so bad after all.....shows what rum can do possibly...for we also had L E E D S !

THE ROAD TO LEEDS

LAND OF THE CHAMPIONS!

THE ICC'S ANNUAL MEETING REPORTED BY K E N C R O S S L A N D + + + + +

Through hill and dale, motorways and railway, ICC members took the road to Leeds once more for the annual meeting on October 6th last - the ninth consecutive annual get-together in fact. And for the second year running it was held at the Wellington Hill Residents Hall, a convenient and comfortable venue negotiated for us by Jim and Mary Throp. From near and far they came, clutching 78s, LPS, projectors, screens, - and the utmost goodwill! This year's function, though long-planned, was not finally announced until virtually the last minute yet it turned out to be one of the best-attended meetings as well as one of the most enjoyable. That was plain to see and in any case was borne out by enthusiastic comments heard on all sides.

Familiar faces included those of Ken Hoyle of Harrogate - Ken was once so accurately described by Reg Bristo as "the urbane Ken Hoyle" - accompanied by one of the newer fellas, one Arthur Hutson. And if I say these were two exceedingly pleasant gentlemen let that stand for ALL those present. From nearby Keighley came George Smith and Jack Feather, together with another near-neighbour, Tommy Smith of Lothersdale. Then there were Reg's "Rhythm Boys" from Hull - Frank Briggs and wife Rita, Alf Farrow and HIS good lady, and unaccompanied Vic Gilmore - all of them most unimpressed by the fact that they now live in - Humberside! Some of us didn't have far to go - yours truly for instance, and the principal organiser, Mike Crampton. Mike had his charming young wife with him as well as Mrs. Crampton Senior - his mother, and to complete the Leeds "locals" was Ken Lone. I've already mentioned Jim and Mary Throp.

From "hot-pot-land" - Lancashire of course - there came "regulars" Frank and Rene Ashurst (the latter looking fit and fully recovered from her operation), and equally ever-presents at these functions, Arnold Pope and his wife Lilian. Arnold had just completed his usual hectic season of cricket umpiring. Our very good - and generous - friend from Bury St. Edmunds, George Aylmer made a reappearance this year after having to miss last year's function through pressure of business. George has put a complete embargo on me from revealing my description of "generous". This we must respect - but all present would certainly say: "Thanks George - much appreciated!"

Among the "new" faces was that of Keith Parkinson, renowned for his film notes about Bing in these pages, Jim Cassidy an enthusiastic and genial newmember - from Brighouse, Yorks, and Burnley respectively; Eric Jackson of Wath-on-Dearne (Rotherham) and the Crowders, Eric and wife Lilian, from Nottingham. Eric, you may recall, got a Crosby programme on Radio Nottingham recently and also gave us the story of the "Nottingham lace" present to Bing by a merchant of that town last Christmas.

Southerners of course included the President of the Frank Sinatra Fan Club, Reg Bristo, who made the long journey from South Wales; Ralph Harding and Charlie Tupper from London and Surrey (Epsom) respectively, John Dobson of London also took time off for the trip to Leeds again and we were pleased to see him. And we were certainly delighted that the London contingent included Mrs. Yvonne Bowles who told us in the last issue that her three children were now starting their own Crosby collections. We ought to see these future torch-bearers one of these days at a future Crosby meeting. If I've omitted anyone, my sincere apologies, but I feel I have covered most routes!

Michael Crampton - to whom we owe such a big "Thank You" for his tremendous work in organising these annual "do's" - opened the proceedings with some well-chosen words sharp around 3 o'clock before handing over to Reg who amused himself (I suspect!) and us by introducing every member of the assembly in the stayle, perhaps, of "Now You Has Crosbyana!" This was a good idea for it made sure we all knew who was

whom and oiled the wheels. Reg followed this by reminding us of the sombre start to the year occasioned by Bing's illness and then produced the startling and wholly delightful news of Bing's projected visit to Britain to record an album! This has now received a temporary setback, as you will read elsewhere, but at least it was another measure of the extent of Bing's recovery. Another well-appreciated point Reg made was in his tribute to the tremendous work always being done by the renowned Crosbyite, Leslie Gaylor.

> "So often," Reg said, "I get letters which begin - 'I have been recommended by Leslie Gaylor of the Isle of Wight to get in touch with you.....' There were members present for the first time who had indeed used that as their introduction to the ICC. Leslie Gaylor never relaxed his endeavours to further the Crosby cause - letters to newspapers, radio producers, disc-jockeys, suggestions to record producers, answering colossal mail as a result of all these endeavours with the result that Leslie was universally known in Britain for his devotion to Bing and matters Crosby.

It was the enthusiastic desire of all present that Reg, in his secretaril capacity, write to Leslie and place on record ~~once~~ again the warm appreciation of all of us for Leslie's tremendous work.

Reg concluded his address by saying how great it was to see all these people, from so many different places, there solely because of their common interest - the talents and personality of the one and only Bing Crosby. He pointed out that this interest could consist of a full collection - or perhaps a couple of dozen Bing records. Neither was, or should be taken as, an indication of the measure of Bing interest entertained by individual members. Everyone made of Crosbyana what they would and it remained a fascinating pursuit.

> Mike Crampton then returned to read messages from absent friends - Ninian Faichney and James Dineen in Scotland, Barry Adams from Ireland, (who incidentally announced his firm intention of attending next year); Pauline Newling, prevented from attending by an attack of 'flu and John Bignell who recently made his debut in these pages. From Australia came a message from diehard Keith Hyde. It wouldn't be a meeting, I guess, if we didn't hear from Keith!

Bob Roberts appropriately sent a taped message, full of interest - and we subsequently heard a full recording of his Radio Medway broadcast with Eric Griffiths. And an excellent broadcast it was. It had to be from two such stalwarts. Leslie Gaylor too had sent a message of warm greeting - in which he revealed that WORLD RECORDS were about to issue a 7-album set of Bing, and United Artists had received the go-ahead on using some of the Bing-Buddy Cole material of the 50's. All this exciting news, and especially the news of the possibility of the London trip, left us "all pewtrified"!

Unusually, Mick Drury sent a tape of greetings - unusually because it is normal for Mick to be there as well as to be prepare his always-well-received tape of requests. This was very conspicuous by its absence this year, alas. Mick hasn't been well; arrangements were left rather late and, in any case, with so many members now attending it has become a Herculean task not only to compile the tape with its records and commentary but also to fit in a tape that runs for about three hours! Records were of course played and produced a much-mixed Crosby selection: Lovely Lady, Red Sails in the Sunset, For Love Alone, Maybe I'm Wrong Again, and the seldom-heard Jimmy, Johnny and Jonas, Sorry, Nobody and Those Were the Days to name but a few.

The time flew by - and it was tea-time. And what a tea-time it turned out! The ladies, Mary Throp, the two Mrs. Cramptons as the main contenders, had prepared an incredibly laden buffet-table, a superb meal to which all did full justice. And when that justice had been seen to be done we settled down to a film show provided by Ralph Harding. This started off with two Mack Sennett "shorts" - both in excellent condition with really good soundtracks and we had the treat of hearing Bing's glorious singing of "Blue of the Night", "Every Time my Heart Beats", "Snuggled On Your

Shoulder" and other songs. This was followed by (Ralph) Harding's TRAVELOGUE, being a fairly comprehensive film-coverage of the month-long trip Ralph made to the States earlier this year. Among other things we saw the outside of Bing's home and Kathy. Bing, it seems, was indisposed at the time.

All too soon it was getting on for eleven o'clock and the various contingents began drifting off - South, across the Pennines, east and most points, all thinking no doubt of the day's events, Bing's miraculous recovery, his forthcoming recordings, the reissues to come.....by the way, it was announced by Ralph that Bing is likely to do a linking dialogue in a comprehensive reissue of those legendary Mack Sennett "shorts", and that is SOMETHING to think about. Perhaps, too, we were thinking of Ralph Harding hanging on beneath the plane to film the take-off!

Next year the meeting will encompass a dinner at the Griffin Hotel, Leeds, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the ICC - and the 10th year of meetings in Leeds. Y'All come now! Its not too early to mark it down as a concrete appointment!

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And a nice, comprehensive, piece of reporting by young Ken Crossland, who is about to finish his studies at Sheffield University. Yes, he's one of the younger fellas but as you will realise, as keen a Crosby man as they come. He's left precious little out but I cannot let the occasion pass without a word or two! President of the Sinatra Fan Club - Reg Bristo! The crack of the year, no doubt - but then, I said I wasn't going to say anything unkind at this particular season of goodwill... especially in view of what - well, you will see later on. It was great to be at Leeds again, meeting so many good friends who most of the year are just names, or the occasional letter, to me....it was good, for instance, to meet Eric Crowder and his wife Lilian, the Popes, the Ashursts - well, all of 'em. I must confess I missed the requests tape this year from Mick Drury - perhaps we could reintroduce it but using the requests only of the first-time visitors? I appreciate that at the rate the attendance is growing a request record for all present would present insurmountable difficulties time-wise.....

REGRETTABLY, THE MOST MOMENTOUS MESSAGE - THAT FROM BING HIMSELF - ARRIVED JUST TOO LATE FOR THE FUNCTION. IT TURNED UP AT MICHAEL'S HOME IN LEEDS JUST A COUPLE OF DAYS AFTERWARDS, AND READ AS FOLLOWS:

October 2, 1974

Dear Michael,

Very happy to receive your letter, and to learn of the good work you're doing with the ICC. I'm very grateful to you and all the members of ICC for your continuing interest.

Unhappily, I was unable to get a cassette off to you in time for the October 6th function. I only returned from Mexico today and it just isn't possible to get anything recorded and to England in time for the meeting.

In lieu of cassette greetings, I would like to substitute this letter, and in the letter, I want to reassure everyone in the ICC that I'm feeling well again and have some recording plans for an album to be made in England under the auspices of Ken Barnes - arrangements by a fella named Pete Moore. You may know these people.

I've heard some of the work that they've done and its quite outstanding.

They're coming to California this week, and I'm going to meet with them in an attempt to select some material.

I have a show which I taped a month or so ago with Bob Hope, Pearl Bailey and Sandy Duncan for CBS television. Going to be released on

October 9th here, and I'm hopeful that it will be released also in England at a later date. Its a very good little show, I believe. Nothing spectacular, but some very good song material, especially written for the piece.

Let me know when you're going to have the 25th anniversary affair, and I'll certainly get a tape off in time to make the date.

All best wishes to everyone -

As ever,

BING.

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We have a first-hand report, as it were, of the TV show Bing mentions - the first since his illness - for it so happened that our member, PETER TANNER, was in the States during October and saw the show. His report of his viewing reads:

MATTERS ARISING!

BING CROSBY AND HIS FRIENDS.
9 to 10pm Pacific Saving Time,
Channel 2 (CBS)

It was a great night for all Bing Crosby's millions of American admirers when the one and only "Old Groaner" proved once again - as if it were necessary - that he still is just about the world's greatest entertainer.

The "special" was entitled BING CROSBY AND HIS FRIENDS. Well, just about everybody is Bing's friend, but on this occasion he was joined by his old sparring partner Bob Hope, aided and abetted by well-known coloured singer Pearl Bailey and young dancer and singer Sandy Duncan.

There were so many good moments, many visual, that it is impossible to put into words, but let me try to give you a short rundown of the proceedings. The programme opened on closed curtains and the orchestra playing Bing's famous signature tune, WHEN THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY.

The curtains parted - and out stepped Bing looking remarkably fit, though perhaps just a little thinner in the face. After the applause had died down - and it took quite a while - Bing started to sing a new song called FEELS GOOD. First lines of this song were, appropriately:

"Its been a while since I had a night out - feels good!
Its been a while since I've been up and about - feels good!"

This number served to introduce Bing's three guests. First of all, Bob Hope - "You look great, Bing. When are they going to take off the bandages?". Pearl Bailey - "Beat it out, brother, with those old ones!" - and Sandy Duncan who joined in with Bing for the last chorus.

After a brief commercial break Sandy Duncan came on to praise the unique and inimitable Crosby style. "I really love to watch you perform and your way with words....you have something nobody else has." Bing replied: "Maybe its my ears? Its my pipe? No - its my physique. Sandy laughed, with everyone else, and it was the cue for a song, ITS YOUR DELIVERY. Another new song duetted in great, relaxed, style by Bing and Sandy - "How do you achieve that lazy style?" "I Take a nice slow tempo, make like a snail - the way the Post Office delivers the mail! That's my lucky daisy, lay back and lazy delivery!" After a while Pearl Bailey broke in and belted out a couple of choruses with Bing in real old blues style.

Following the next break, Bing and Bob reminisced with Pearl and Sandy about the Hollywood Palace, the former vaudeville theatre where this programme was video-

taped. Bing and Bob had both, of course, both appeared there in the old days, while Pearl and Sandy had done TV shows in this theatre. It all served as an excuse for everyone to recreate their experiences. "I got quite a good few laughs here in the old days," observed,Bob. "Who were you watching at the time?" jested Bing. "Easy there or I'll give your nuse the night off and you'll have to find the bathroom by yourself..." The wisecracks flashed back and forth in the time-honoured manner until Pearl broke it up with a red-hot version of that old standard AFTER YOU'VE GONE.

Next it was Sandy's turn and she explained that though she was too young to have known it as a regular theatre, she did do an audition there once. She was given two minutes to show her prowess at ballet, tap-dancing, acrobatic dancing - and singing. "You've got yourself another two minutes," says Bing, and Sandy went into her routine to the tune of I AM A BRASS BAND.

Now it was time for Bob Hope to recall his vaudeville days at the Hollywood Palace. "Animal acts were the big thing then and I did an act with a trained fly." Bob then pretended to introduce Hubert the Wonder Fly who sings and plays tunes on a rack of old car horns. "Remember our contract, Hubert? I carry the act - you carry the luggage. What would you like to sing Hubert? There's nothing moister than an oyster? And now Hubert the Wonder Fly will play Victor Herbert's immortal AH SWEET MYSTERY OF LIFE on these here horns!" At this point Bing strolled on wearing a huge cloth cap and started to heckle Bob. "Tell me, did you get a shoe horn with that cap?" quipped Bob, and after some more repartee, they went into the old routine - a couple of hoofers once again- the theme of so many of their films in the past.

> After the break, it was another solo spot for Bing, this time to sing a new song entitled NO TIME AT ALL. Though Bing put this over in his inimitable manner, I felt that the "its-later-than-you-think" theme and its accentuation on old age was inappropriate to anyone as youthful and zestful as Bing appeared. Far better, I felt, for him to have sung any one of the hundreds of songs with which he is identified.

Once more Bob came on for a few more minutes of cracks and sharp repartee, mostly concerned with the golf course until Pearl Bailey suggests that maybe when they get too old for golf they should take up sewing. This led all three of them back into a final chorus of NO TIME AT ALL (for anything!)

Now it was Sandy's turn to pay tribute to both Bing and Bob singing a set of new lyrics to Bob's signature tune THANKS FOR THE MEMORY. While she was singing, various clips from ROAD pictures were shewn on a big screen behind her:

> Thanks for the memory - of roads to here and there - roads to everywhere - from Bali to Utopia - I wish that I'd been there - those roads will never be the same without that crazy pair - so, thank you, so much....

There followed more cracks about the ROAD pictures. "Pretty old pictures we saw there - I noticed in one of them you were carrying a comb!" remarked Bob. There followed another song duetted by Bing and Bob entitled I COULDN'T GET AWAY FROM YOU. This ended with Bob observing: "We look like two losers on a dating game!"

All too soon it seemed to me, and no doubt to most other viewers, it was time for the finale. First of all it was a vocal tribute to Bing himself called HARRY LILLIS CROSBY sung in madrigal form by the others. "What goes on here,?" asked Bing. "We are just trying to lay a little tribute on you," replied Pearl. "Do you know that you have introduced over eight hundred and thirty two songs," continued Sandy."You've sold over three hundred million records." "Where did you pick up all that information, Sandy?" To which Bob couldn't resist retorting: "Are you kidding? Its printed on the bumper-sticker of your car!"

Again the orchestra struke up WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT to introduce a medley of great Crosby hits which included LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE, MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU, FROM THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD, SWEET LEILANI, BLUE HAWAII, THE ROAD TO MOROCCO (Bing and Bob duet) MISSISSIPPI MUD, IN THE COOL, COOL, COOL OF

THE EVENING, DOWN THE OLD OX ROAD, GOING MY WAY, WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS, PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, SWINGING ON A STAR, SMALL FRY, I SURRENDER, DEAR (satirised by Bing and Bob); then WHITE CHRISTMAS - one line from Bing - leading back into Bing on his own up to the mike with WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT once again as he had done so very, very many times in the past. It was an extremely emotional moment which was certainly felt by the audience who proceeded to give Bing a rapturous and standing ovation.

And as the applause finally began to fade a little Bing sang:
"Its been a while since I had a night out - feels good.....

GOODNIGHT!"

So ended a wonderful and often quite highly-charged hour of really top entertainment - the sort of authentic super-star performances that only artists of the calibre of Bing and Bob can give today.

++

We're extremely grateful to Peter Tanner for this exclusive review of Bing's mementous return to television after his illness. Peter is, of course, a film-editor and before this visit to the States was in Africa for several months. He has been writing in jazz and popular music journals for over thirty years and numbers BING and GOLDEN YEARS among his favourite magazines. For us - well, we're proud to have him!

++

NOW HEARKEN (or study!) this - and it is 'ol Reg Bristo writing it:

> THE SINATRA MUSIC SOCIETY welcomes new members. Our magazine, "PERFECTLY FRANK" features Sinatra plus other "great ones". For full details please send s.a.e. to the PRO, Mrs. Beryl Overbury, 60 Highland Way, Redditch, Worcs. B98 7RH.

Advt.

And if that does make readers sit up, nothing will! But it all goes back to the day I received a letter imposingly headed THE SINATRA MUSIC SOCIETY. My immediate thought was "Its a challenge to a duel, a fight to the death....they've found me!" Especially after the last issue of Bing! But no, the writer hadn't seen the last BING and it was a perfectly friendly letter from the lady Beryl mentioned in the above notice suggesting that we exchange advertisements for our two organisations in each other's magazine! I got over my first shock, but was still rather wan and pale as I pondered how on earth I was to reply to Beryl. Finally, I hedged and h'mmm and h'aaahd - and after endeavouring to be as nice as Beryl had been to me, I had to come out and say, with brutal FRANKness: I can't stand Sinatra!!! I was sorry afterwards, for certainly, as I've always pointed out, its everyone to their taste. But such an invitation to me of all people seemed macabre, to say the least. I mean, if it had been sent to John Bassett it would have been easier to bear.

However, although I thought that would be the end of that particular piece of correspondence and that diplomatic relations would at least be broken off. I may even be ex-communicated. But I had the wind taken completely from my sails a few days later when I had an equally friendly letter (as the earlier one) from Beryl saying she had laughed all the way to the office the day she had received my letter - and certainly appreciated my honesty! More than that, she was so tickled with my letter that she and her friends made a point of singing Bing songs most of the day in their various singalongs. (I must say, I don't often feel like singing at work these days. All honour to those that do!)

Anyway, we had more letters and the upshot is the above advertisement. An announcement about the ICC will be appearing in "PERFECTLY FRANK" on a reciprocal basis. And I want to put on record the fact that I believe Beryl Overbury to be a very nice lady indeed. I'm NOT saying she will enrol me as a member but a high degree of tolerance, previously conspicuous by its absence, will creep into my thoughts regarding a certain singer who was once irreverently referred to as The Thin One! Isn't that nice?

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME.....

Well, Monmouthshire has become Gwent, and nobody seems to care much! No good saying Gwent is shorter than Monmouthshire 'cos we always wrote it "Mon" anyway....Hull is no longer in Yorks. but comes under the name of Humberside, as was remarked in the Leeds report and our hitherto carefree readers in Hull are all steamed up (to coin a phrase!). Many counties have, of course, now got a new identity and we've got a couple of years to get used to it. But will Hull.....? Still, it may help our Hull readers (tho' I doubt it) if they read the following view from a reader in Cleethorpes, South Humberside:

> "This Humberside business is 100 per cent for the benefit of Hull - they are now mis-running everything. I am very bitter about it - I ran the Docks Board's Estate Dept for 21 years here, annual rent-roll £1¼ million. They have closed my office and added the 1¼ million to their miserable £278,000 - with a staff of 13! We had two....Grrrr...Someone on Humberside Radio yesterday said nothing happens in Hull after 10 pm. I felt like ringing 'em to tell 'em nothing happens before 10 pm either. They all come out in droves to watch the traffic lights change....they ate the last four missionaries we sent them - RAW!

Spreading the Christmas spirit indeed! I'm sure our Hull readers will take it in the spirit in which it is offered - vicious! Yet I'm sure our Cleethorpes reader was only joking. I think! Let's hope the bonds of Crosbyana will one day heal the wounds. Must remember to ask Frank Briggs, Alf Farrow and Victor Gilmore among others what raw missionary tastes like!

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FROM HUMBERSIDE - to MERSEYSIDE! And a story completely without venom! A reader of GOLDEN YEARS and thus very keen on the old dance bands and singers, had the idea of putting on a 30 minutes' programme and put it to Radio Merseyside when it started up. This was about five years ago. He had never broadcast before and had only his keenness to sustain him. Radio Merseyside were rather doubtful but finally permitted a pilot show or two. His programme has been running weekly ever since! It has become one of the most popular shows on that local radio station.

So much so that recently - in November to be precise - enthusiasm was such that a 30's style dance was organised by Radio Merseyside with their star disc-jockey - FRANK UNWIN is his name. The idea was to have The Blue Magnolia Jazz Band there (a Liverpool outfit fast making a name for itself) but mostly to dance to records of the 30's and thereabouts. Frank decided to solicit message tapes from certain celebrities who have appeared on his radio programme over the years. These included Billy Terrent, Sydney Lipton, Harry Leader, Roy Fox, Victor Sylvester - and BING CROSBY! Now Bing has only appeared on Frank Unwin's programme via records, of course - but Bing sent him a really splendid tape and as you might imagine, this was indeed the highspot of the evening and later on when it was broadcast over Radio Merseyside.

Bing sent greetings to Liverpool and Merseyside generally, remarking on the fine golf-courses around there and said he was sorry to interrupt the festivities with a message from "a staid indigent crooner!" Bing then said that, in reply to Frank's unease about his health earlier in the year, he was now fine and indeed had a TV show going out on October 9 and would soon be doing his Christmas show.

> Bing then added that he was expecting to get in some recording before the end of the year in order that his record of making discs every year since 1926 would be maintained. He sounded great and was rapturously received. Any keen tape fans who would like to hear thistape need only let me know (Reg Bristo) and they can borrow it. This will probably mean a waiting list!

An interesting little twist to the evening was that Frank had also invited Denny Dennis to the "memories dance" - and he too sang in great style although he does little singing these days. Denny was, of course, once known as Britain's Bing Crosby. Pity he eschews show business these days. But the whole thing was a tremendous and memorable triumph

for Frank Unwin who deserves the warmest congratulations. Another "guest of honour" was Mrs. Wilf Hamer, a 30's band leader who played at the Grafton Rooms, St. Georges Hall and other notable Liverpool venues. She took over the leadership of the band when her husband died tragically early. She still plays excellent piano and indeed, accompanied Denny Dennis.

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The tape containing Bing's message is 2-track, speed $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips and I am prepared to loan it out in strict rotation as requests are received. So, be patient.....

==========

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME: is indeed contained in a little plastic oblong box!

To wit, the cassette. There can be little doubt that the recording industry is preparing to switch to cassette recording in a big way - and methinks, in a few years the ONLY way. It is most noticeable that record shops now have almost half their browsing space devoted to cassettes. Furthermore, cassette-recorders are being pushed in a big way by the industry. And when the industry makes a move things happen very quickly indeed! Remember how 78s disappeared almost overnight?

But the clearest indication of this forthcoming switch must have been contained in an advertisement by AKAI in the Observer a few Sunday back. This read:

> "When Akai moved into the tape cartridge and cassette field, there must have been a few shudders in the record industry.
>
> Its not the world's best-kept secret that gramophone records are a highly impractical method of reproducing sound.
>
> In fact, not one major company has recorded directly on to disc for over twenty years. They've all used tape. And there's a simple reason for that: tape is better than disc. Tape doesn't warp or scratch and shouldn't get raddled with static. Cassettes are very convenient and practical. AND WE RECKON, GIVEN A COUPLE OF YEARS, THAT THESE HANDY, CONVENIENT LITTLE PLASTIC PACKAGES WILL MURDER THOSE FLAT DUSTY DISCS."

You cannot have it much clearer than that, I feel. Well, it doesn't mean that in a couple of years our records will be no use to us, of course. Some people, believe it or not, are still playing cylinders! Agreeing about the compactness and, therefore, easier and smaller storage, I have doubts as to whether I shall ever fully accept them instead of my beloved records! I love records the way some people love books, or jade, or Ming! I love their shiny blackness, I love the magical names on the labels (especially when it reads BING CROSBY); I love the colourful sleeves, the sleeve notes (if they're reasonably accurate!). Little plastic boxes though. I wonder..... We have been warned in unmistakable terms.....

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PHIL CLARKE, 69 Walden Road, Stamshaw, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 8PH enters a plea for a Stateside friend, KEVIN ANDERSON, 455 North Reeder Ave. Covina, California, USA who desperately wants the following records: The Summit (Reprise); Bix, To be or not to be (24008); Bix and Tram (Parl); Tribute to Mike Holliday (Columbia); Wilfred Thomas Show; Around the Christmas Tree/Among my Souvenirs/Beloved Hymns/The Early Thirties AH 88 (all Ace of Hearts of course); Napolion NLP 11007; Spanish Cobra item; Japanese RA 5298; Twilight on the Trail (Brunswick). Please write to Kevin if able to help! As a matter of fact, Phil Clarke would like most of these (except the A. of H.) and has plenty of LPS &c. to offer or cash. So, really they're in competition! You may remember from the last issue that Phil is the member who is the proud owner of a video recorder. He has written to the BBC asking if they will video-tape the Parkinson/Bing show! Well, they might! Phil also says that when he has enough taping for a day's showing he's going to invite us all down to see it!

Nice fella!

SMILES FROM CALL ME LUCKY NO 3

Bing tackled his autobiography in largely light and humourous fashion. This series shows how to members who do not possess this delightful book.....

Bing's own story, published by SIMON & SCHUSTER, INC. 1953. Acknowledgements to the publishers and to Bing Crosby.

By and large, the fans have been good to me. When they see me on the street, in an elevator, or in a hotel lobby, their first reaction is "Why, there's somebody I know." They smile and I smile back. Some of them say, "How are you?" and when I say, "Fine," they say "That's good" and walk on a few feet further. Then they stop, do a double-take and I can see them saying to themselves, "No, it couldn't have been." Then they walk on, looking a little puzzled.

Other people come up to me and say, "Hello, I've enjoyed seeing you on the screen." I say, "I'm glad you feel that way," and we shake hands.

Some of them want autographs, but in spite of stories of stars being chivvied by ravening hordes of autograph hounds, many of them aren't so pursued. However, I do run into the hard-to-please who criticise my handwriting and ask scornfully, "Is that the best you can do?"

When I protest, "I'm sorry; I can't write any better than that," they go away disgustedly. "Well, nobody'll ever recognise this."

Then there's the ones with leaky pens....

==========

In the years before Hitler pounded into German noodles the idea that they were supermen, the Germans had nicknamed me Der Bingle and I had given a little fellow named Hen Michelmans a run for the loose marks kicking around in the Rhineland. When I got to London (during the War) the Office of Strategic Services thought it might be a good idea if I broadcast direct to the German people. Buzz bombs were falling all over London at the time, and its citizenry took a dim view of Kraut Kultur, to say the least. When the time for the broadcast came and I walked into the studio some of my English fans showed up and there was a certain amount of commotion outside. An English stenographer passing by asked, "What's going on in there?"

"Bing Crosby's broadcasting to the Germans," she was told.

She was outraged. To her, it didn't seem punishment enough...

The inhabitants of the British Isles are a stanch and sturdy--but to Yanks, an incomprehensible--breed. When I arrived at Greenock, a troop-embarkation town in Scotland, I ran into Fred Astaire, and we went to Glasgow together to take a train for London. Glasgow is off the beaten path for ordinary trans-Atlantic travel. Even in peacetime its unusual for anyone in show business to go through that city on the way to London, Paris, or Rome. So our appearance in Glasgow--if I may be so immodest-- was a sensation. I can only conclude that the last American actor seen there before Fred and I hit the town was Tom Mix or John Bunny. It seemed to us that people came out of the braes and glens who hadn't been in Glasgow for years.

The police estimated that there were thirty-five thousand or forty

thousand people milling around the depot where we made our stopover. It wasn't a big depot, and because of the pushing and crowding, Fred was afraid someone might get hurt, so we got the police to lock us in the baggage room for protection until the train left. The crowd grew more demonstrative and announced that they wanted me to sing and Fred to dance, but they filled every inch of space and there was no room for us to do either. The train was made up and ready to go, but we couldn't board it because we couldn't shove through the press. The policemen waggled reproving pinkies, but although a bobbie's slightest wish is usually law in Great Britain, it made no difference in this case.

The crowd continued to surge around the baggage room for forty-five minutes. Fred and I were desperate. We had performance dates in London; it was important for us to take the train, and it couldn't be held for us much longer.

In the crisis, I peered through a window to see a figure striding down a ramp. He was dressed in striped trousers, a frock coat, a wing collar, the inevitable Ascot scarf, and a high silk hat.

Confronting the crowd, he said "Stand clear! Do you hear me? Stand clear!" He pronounced it "cle-ah."

An amazing thing happened. The crowd fell back like a receding wave. We made our exit from the baggage room and walked down a ramp while our guardian in the high hat held up his band portentously, like Moses giving the word to the Red Sea. When the train pulled out, and the conductor came through, Fred and I asked, "Who was the fellow who had such a phenomenal control over the crowd? Was he the Minister of Transport?"

"That," the conductor said, "was the stytion mawster!"

I don't know how that stationmaster rates with his wife, but I know one thing: to everyone else he's the most important fellow in Glasgow.

==========

I imagine that was the first time Glasgow Station had been called a depot! Bing's reference to his being dubbed Der Bingle in Germany gives us the opportunity to present some appropriate

PICTURES on opposite page.....

TOP RIGHT: A most attractive photograph of Bing that appeared in a German publication. I won't attempt a translation - tho' its not too difficult to appreciate what was written without being a linguist. And you will readily recognise BING CROSBY - AN AMERICAN PHENOMENON!

BOTTOM RIGHT: This is a wartime picture of Bing in France.

TOP LEFT: Bing caught on the "set" in the time-honoured way of Hollywood, with his name on his "resting-chair" between "shots".

Middle left: Obviously two unknown fans who turned up to see Bing on the set.

Bottom left: Another excellent, more up-to-date picture of Bing which has reproduced with mixed results! In case you cannot read the text which accompanies this picture it reads: "BING CROSBY, long one of the giants of the industry, was born Harry Lillis Crosby in Tacoma, Washington, May 2, 1904. Der Bingle began as a band singer, became a top radio star before he made THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1932, his first film. His voice is a familiar one all over the world and it is said that there is not a moment when somewhere on the globe a record he made isn't being publicly played. His first wife, Dixie Lee, mother of Gary, Phillip, Dennis and Lindsay died in 1952. In 1957 Bing married actress Kathy Grant, became the father of a fifth son in August 1958 and at last a daughter in 1959....."

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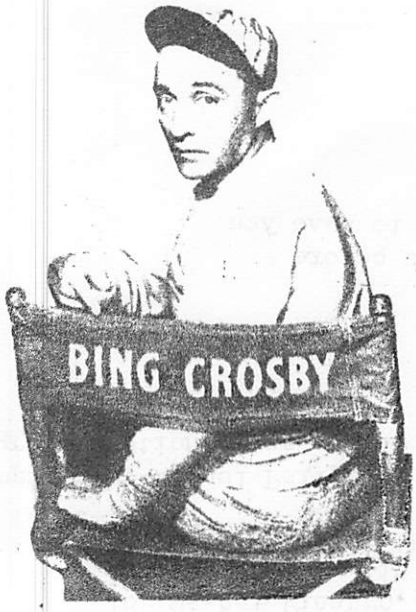

Bing Crosby, richtiger Name Harry L. Crosby, wurde am 2. Mai 1904 in Tacoma (Washington) geboren. Filme mit ihm, die wir in Deutschland sahen: „Der Weg zum Glück" (für den er 1944 den Oscar bekam), „Die Glocken von St. Marien", „Nur für dich", „Weg nach Utopia", „Weg nach Sansibar", „Weg nach Marokko", „Kleines Herz findet heim", „Lach und wein mit mir", „Weg nach Rio", „Ich küsse Ihre Hand, Madame", „Weiße Weihnacht" und jetzt „Ein Mädchen vom Lande".

It's happy days on the Paramount lot as Ivy Wilson and Derek say hello to that master of song Bing Crosby.

Alles über Mr. Music

Bing Crosby – ein amerikanisches Phänomen

BING CROSBY, long one of the giants of the industry, was born Harry Lillis Crosby in Tacoma, Washington, May 2, 1904. Der Bingle began as a band singer, became a top radio star before he made The Big Broadcast in 1932, his first film. His voice is a familiar one all over the world and it is said that there is not a moment when somewhere on the globe a record he made isn't being publicly played. His first wife, Dixie Lee, mother of Gary, Philip, Dennis and Lindsay, died in 1952. In 1957 Bing married actress Kathy Grant, became the father of a fifth son in August 1959 and at last a daughter in 1959. Latest: High Time, Jimmy Durante Story. ★Going My Way, '44.

(guitariste et compositeur), Nicole Colette Dereal et Bing Crosby au Jardin d'Acclimatation.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ (I HOPE!)

1. (f) 1934; (d) 1937; (e) 1939; (b) 1940; (c) 1942; (a) 1949.
2. Doris Day - the others duetted with Bing.
3. 1963
4. Sing Soft, Sing Sweet, Sing Gentle - Schnozzle Durante.
5. Take Me Back to my boots & saddle.
   Cool Water.
   San Fernando Valley.
   Lone Star Trail.
   At least 3: The Last Round-Up; When the Moon Comes Over Madison Sq. and A Hundred and Sixty Acres.
6. (a) The Waiter and the Porter &c.
   (b) Y'All Come.
   (c) On behalf of the visiting firemen.
7. Sweet Betsy from Pike/Betsy and Buffalo Gals/Dance with a dolly.
8. (a) I Don't Stand a ghost of a chance (b) Sam's Song (c) MacNamara's Band.
9. How Green Was My Valley.
10. First names of - The Mills Brothers.
11. Ol' Man River; Red River Valley; Walk me by the river; Where the River Shannon Flows; Down by the river; Lazy river; Rhythm on the river; The river.
12. (a) Guy Lombardo
    (b) Dorsey Bros.
    (c) Gus Arnheim.
    (d) Russ Morgan.
    (e) Victor Young.
    (f) Matty Matlock.
    (g) John Scott Trotter.
13. Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey.
14. Victor Young.
15. They were accompanied by vocal chorus only; musicians' strike in 1942 - Ken Darby Singers were the "orchestra".
16. Reunion 1943 for a broadcast with Paul Whiteman, since issued on record, of course.
17. Captain Eddie Dunstedter; "Hello Mom" with his West Coast Army Air Force Training Centre Orchestra (whew!) Normally, Eddie was an organist. Record made and issued 1942.
18. Mishel Piastro.
19. The doctor - in Stagecoach.
20. Bill Justis - the Great Country Hits.

Compiled by Lionel Pairpoint and Reg Bristo.
Regret question 12 as set is misprinted, but the sense is not lost.

==========

DELIBERATELY PRINTED UPSIDE-DOWN to save you accidentally studying the answers before attempting the quiz!

ICC INTERVIEW WITH BING - IN HOLLYWOOD !

SPECIAL !!

"fancy meeting you here!"

Many of our members have had the thrill and pleasure of meeting Bing, sometimes unexpectedly. There was Martin Clements, of Barnes, who read in the papers that Bing was in London: he jumped on a bus, found the hotel, enquired, found Bing was not in...and disappointedly decided to "Walk around the block" just in case - and did indeed bump into Bing!

PETER TANNER, as you have already read, is in Hollywood in his capacity as a film Editor, working on a film for American TV in the series JANE GOODALL AND THE WORLD OF ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR. But that's not all - here is PETER'S account of his exciting encounter with Mr. Crosby.....

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It was a Monday morning in California and, though the month was November, the temperature was up around eighty-five degrees at noon. I was walking through an empty sound stage at Metromedia's Hollywood studios when I spotted walking close behind me someone dressed as Father Christmas. I thought how hot he must be with all those long white whiskers and that heavy red Santa Claus suit.

I held the big studio door open for him to come through after me. "Thanks a lot, this is a great day to be dressed up as Santa, isn't it?" said a voice that was quite unmistakeable.

YES, it WAS - it really was BING CROSBY in person!

This wonderful opportunity was too good and too unpected to miss. I introduced myself and told Bing that though my professional occupation was a film editor, I also wrote articles for various music and entertainment magazines, including BING and the GOLDEN YEARS.

"Oh yes, I get those magazines all the time. I really get a kick out of the interest so many of you British show in my work. Sometimes I feel that you know more about me than I do myself!" said Bing.

And at this point an assistant director came up to whisk Bing onto the set as all was then ready for him. "Nice to have met you," said Bing, "come and see me in my trailer sometime, I'm here all week."

Bing, together with his wife Kathryn, Mary Frances, Harry and Nathanial Crosby were all at the studio to video-tape Bing's traditional annual Christmas show to be shewn on American TV sometime during Christmas week - Bing wasn't quite sure when.

As bad luck would have it, it was a particularly busy week for me and I was virtually confined to my editing room most of the time with my American producer and director. In fact, we were so busy that we didn't even break for lunch but instead had sandwiches and coffee sent up to us.

From the open door of my room I could catch occasional glimpses of Bing and the members of his family going to and fro from their caravan dressing rooms to the stage. And once I saw Bing eating a hamburger with his son Harry. Also, many times I saw studio workers come up to shake him by the hand and no doubt congratulate him on his recovery from his oper-

ation. This was not, clearly, because Bing is still a great super-star, but also that he is just a marvellous person with a warmth that is infectious and which he manages to pass on to everyone he meets.

On about three occasions, on the excuse that I must leave the room, I managed to rush down to the stage and watch the shooting of this Christmas Special of the Crosbys. On one of these occasions Bing was singing a song to playback.

> As one who has had no end of trouble in the past trying to get the voice and mouth movements to fit, it was a real technical thrill for me to watch a true master at work. Bing's miming fitted perfectly to the pre-recorded words of the song blaring out from a loudspaker.
>
> AT ONE POINT, THE SOUND BROKE DOWN BUT BING WENT ON SINGING ANYWAY IN PERFECT TEMPO UNTIL THE DIRECTOR CALLED "CUT!"

On the third of such trips I was caught out by my producer who came onto the set to bring me back to work. "I just knew I would find you here, Peter," he said with a smile. However, the Crosby magic captivated him, too, and we both stayed on for a further ten minutes or so to watch a scene between Kathryn, Bing and Western singer Mac Davis.

Finally, on the very last day I had a brief break from work and, as good luck would have it, there was Bing sitting all by himself in his trailer-caravan looking amazingly youthful and in excellent health after his fairly recent illness.

> "Come on in, " he called out as he saw me hesitating in the doorway. "Tell me about this animal film you're editing."

Well, the last thing I wanted to do was to talk to Bing about my work, as I had a million questions I wanted to ask him. But it was to no avail! I had to go into details of the shooting in East Africa - a part of the world, of course, that Bing knows well and where he too has fairly recently made an animal film about cheetahs. He was interested in how all the many thousands of feet of film went together in the cutting room and told me some of his adventures whilst on safari.

> The last thing he wanted to discuss was his work as the world's greatest popular singer. And it was so easy talking to Bing that the time went by all too quickly.

Eventually I did manage to talk about his recording days and somehow the conversation got around, would you believe it, to British singers and to Al Bowlly in particular.

"I knew him well," Bing told me, "he was a very good friend of mine when he was over here with Ray Noble." Knowing the answer beforehand, I nevertheless asked Bing if he had at any time ever recorded with Al Bowlly. As I expected, Bing replied that, to his regret, that had never been possible.

I then related to Bing how some very misguided record collectors had the idea that it was Al Bowlly who sang the first chorus on Bing's famous record of SWEET LEILANI. Bing really laughed at this: "Do those people really think that I would use a singer of such international fame as Al Bowlly had then and not give him any credit on the record label?"

> Bing went onto confirm that it was indeed the lead singer of the Hawaiian group that accompanied him who was responsible. So, for all time let that silly story die the death it deserves! I did not, as a matter of fact, like asking Bing this question, but felt it should be sorted out once and for ever as I keep reading about it in various music magazines.

Bing also confirmed that he never recorded with the Ben Bernie Band, thus squelching another persistent rumour among record collectors. "I knew Ben well. He was a great

guy, but I am quite sure that I never did a record date with him."

At this point Mrs. Crosby, Kathryn, came in looking as beautiful as ever. Bing introduced me and then immediately began to tell her about the film on HYENAS that I am editing which seemed to interest her as much as it had Bing.

"Its great to see Bing looking so well again," I told her. "Here am I dying to ask him all sorts of questions about himself and he keeps asking me about MY work. You know, I have always been one of Bing's great admirers."

"Who isn't,?" replied Kathryn with a wonderful smile. I could see that they were both ready to leave after a long day's work and so I got up to go.

"GIVE MY REGARDS TO EVERYONE WHEN YOU GO BACK," SAID BING, SHAKING ME BY THE BAND. "MY BEST WISHES TO JOHN BASSETT, REG BRISTO, RALPH HARDING AND FRANK MURPHY AND, OH, SO MANY, MANY OTHERS. TELL THEM I WILL BE WRITING OR MAYBE SENDING THEM A CASSETTE TAPE. YOU KNOW, I FIND THAT EASIER AND MORE PERSONAL THAN A LETTER. I AM HOPING THAT THIS SHOW AND ALSO THE ONE YOU SAW A FEW WEEKS AGO ("BING CROSBY AND HIS FRIENDS"already reported in this issue) WILL BE SHOWN IN BRITAIN, BUT I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE SOME TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITH REGARD TO THE TAPES. I HOPE THAT THEY WILL BE SORTED OUT AND EVERYONE WILL ENJOY THEM AS I REALLY DO APPRECIATE THE INTEREST IN MY WORK THAT IS SHOWN BY SO MANY OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN."

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How about that for an exclusive - and personal - story! Peter Tanner lives in Hedgerley, Bucks and hopes to be home for Christmas. Needless to say, we're very grateful for his story and the very personal message of goodwill it contains.

I was glad that Peter clarified that bizarre "story" of Al Bowlly singing on SWEET LEILANI. Like Bing, I roared with laughter when I first heard it mooted. And interesting too to confirm that Bing never recorded with Ben Bernie; only recently it has been suggested that Bing did a "vocal refrain" with Ben Bernie BEFORE "I'VE GOT THE GIRL".

But, what a lovely, exciting, encounter for Peter. One can almost live it again with him. And how nice that Bing never fails to pay tribute to his British admirers.

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BING'S MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY reissued on Coral Rainbow series, see p.9 - just to keep things straight, this is NOT a stereo-enhanced version of the famous set but remains in mono, playable on stereo sets. When in London on a flying visit recently I found that this set, normal price £7.36p - the cheapest it has ever been available - was actually being offered by certain shops at £6.35p! These are the TEMPLAR RECORD shops, addresses 86 High Holborn, WC1, 76a Chancery Lane, WC2, and 9a Irving Street, WC2 (all London, of course). I don't know whether these shops do mail order, but if you want the set and can get to London....they're the shops! You COULD ask if they would post. This set, as far as sound goes, seems better to me than the original Brunswick issue - but the packaging is inferior. A booklet, with different photos, is included however. It is a fantastic bargain at either price!

And as indicated elsewhere, Bing is turning up all over the place with one or two tracks on "collection" records.....and now MGM have reissued the SPECIAL MAGIC OF BING CROSBY, the old "best of Bing Crosby", first on Capitol, then several other labels (including MFP!). The price of this new issue is £2.11p. MGM never relax in their efforts for the fast buck!

THERE IS NO DOUBTING THE FACT THAT, INCREDIBLY IN THIS DAY AND AGE, BING'S RECORDS ARE INDEED VERY, VERY PROMINENT INDEED IN THE RECORD SHOPS! MORE IMPORTANTLY, BING DOES INDEED SEEM TO BE IN VERY GOOD VOICE NOW...TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE SAYING IT FOR IT TO BE SYMPATHETIC ENCOURAGEMENT....

"BING IS A JOY TO WORK WITH"

We have been incredibly fortunate to present, in this Christmas issue of BING, so many first-hand, personal reports of contact with Bing. A wonderful way to end a year which began so sombrely. The news - the sensational news - that Bing may be coming to London to record has already been presented but it seems desirable that more of the fascinating correspondence that has been going on between, mainly, KEN BARNES and LES GAYLOR should be presented for the edification of all readers. Thus, the following are merely excerpts which are of absorbing interest to all Crosby admirers. And we are, of course, greatly indebted to Mr. Barnes. You will see that some of the ideas thrown out truly make the mind boggle at their full potentiality:

"...I wouldn't have missed the opportunity to record Bing for anything. If you could have seen the delighted looks on the faces of everyone in the United Artists office as they listened to the voice tracks of Bing and Johnny (Mercer) you'd know what I was talking about... the general opinion is that Bing is sounding better than at any time in the last ten years - not only is the voice warmer and richer, but it is more expressive and physically much stronger.

I honestly think that if Bing is prepared to take a little time off and come to London and work as diligently as he did on the California session, he could make the whole industry sit up and take notice. Right now the commercial conditions could not be more in his favour. United Artists Records would like to mount a massive international campaign - hopefully based on his 50th anniversary in show business. This, of course, will depend on Bing's sanction. His TV production people want to launch a series of celebration programmes complete with film clips and Bing singing and narrating his life story.

I must say that, along with the great box-office success of THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT, plus the fact that Bing is now singing so well, there will never be a better time to do this.....Bing said that his 50th anniversary as a recording artist is not until 1976 - but in 1976 the campaign might be slightly overshadowed by the fact that America will be celebrating 200 years of Independence.....1776 to 1976....

Right now, with Como so big in this country, U.A. honestly feel that they could bring Bing into the top ten and are fully prepared to back this Crosby product with full scale radio and dealer promotion...

"And, as if that weren't enough, I've just had a call from Mr. John Fisher of the Parkinson TV Show with an offer to present Bing in a special programme built around the new LP, THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT, complete with Pete Moore and the full orchestra plus - if he wants to make the trip - guest artist Johnny Mercer. This TV contact, I know came from your (Leslie Gaylor's) enthusiastic promotional efforts, but it seems to have grown to even greater proportions than any of us could have visualised. The budget on the Parkinson Show is usually very small indeed - the only other artist who has ever had a full orchestra was Andy Williams.

So here's a built-in opportunity for Bing to not only make a first-class album, but to go on TV and plug it on the biggest-rated show in the country. What a coup!

"...Bing is a joy to work with, professionally. And contrary to what I was led to believe, he is a hard and conscientious worker. Someone I know who had worked with him on previous occasions told me that he would never do more than three takes of a song. Be that as it may - all I know is that on our session, which took place on the morning of October 17, Bing worked hard for almost five hours on just two

songs. He and Johnny were in great form. Two great jazz singers showing everyone that experience is still the best teacher. Our young recording engineer, Tom Oliver, who is more accustomed to recording rock groups like Steppinwolf, etc., was full of admiration for the way Bing and John worked together. His mother, he told me, was a Crosby fan from way back, and it was her birthday the following day....Bing obliged by signing a birthday card for Mrs. Oliver....

What Pete and I were most concerned about was Bing's range which, on certain records we had heard, suggested that he had lost much of his power in the upper register. If this was true, the operation seems to have rectified it. As far as I can tell, Bing's range seems to have expandéd by at least a full note at the top of his register.....his tone is much rounder than on records of the last few years. He sounds more like he used to back in the 1940's....

> But the most remarkable thing of all was the surprising volume of his voice during these rehearsal sessions. His voice actually sounded much bigger in person than it appears on record. So I made a note of this when it came to recording him with Mercer. Instead of using the usual intimate filter mike that, I am sure, most producers use when they record singers, I decided to put Bing on an AKG omni-directional mike (the kind one would use to record trumpets or trombones, as a matter of fact). This meant that he would have to stand much further away from the mike itself in order for the sound to be properly absorbed. I'm happy to say the experiment paid off. Bing now sounds as he should.
>
> The people at United Artists who have heard the tracks are wildly delighted at the results....they say Bing sounds better than he has for years. There is no question that he is certainly singing better....from a stylistic as well as vocal standpoint.

At the session, Bing put a proposition to me....with the result that Bing will now be making two LPs for United Artists.....Bing's first objection was that it was hardly worth coming over to simply record a dozen songs....so I got permission to do a second LP - and Bing is now thinking about coming over around the end of January or beginning of February.

> If not, we will have to record the backgrounds here in London and I will have to fly to California and put Bing's vocals down over the tracks. Artistically, this is not a satisfying way to record an album - it is even more of a pity when one considers what fine shape the Crosby voice is in these days. To be fair to Bing, I know he realises the shortcomings of such an operation and he has promised me that he will give the London trip some serious thought.
>
> IF HE DOES COME OVER TO LONDON, BOTH PETE AND MYSELF ARE CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL RESULT IN HIS BEST ALBUM FOR YEARS.

The repertoire for the first album has been selected and the songs are now being orchestrated. The title is THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT - a Les Reed melody, which had an original lyric by Peter Dacre (of the Sunday Express). Some of the lyric wasn't suitable for Bing so I re-wrote about two-thirds of it. When Bing first looked at the song he liked it immediately, but was critical of just one or two lines and proceeded to re-write some of the song.

> We think its got a great chance to be another "My Way" and generally speaking it is in much better taste. The song is ideally suited to Bing's personality and image. I think it will be a big hit.

The remaining songs are: No time at All; Best Things in Life are Free; Bon Vivant; Breezing Along with the Breeze; Some Sunny Day (totally different to the BING WITH A BEAT version); The Good Old Times; Razzle Dazzle; I Love to dance like they Used to

Dance; Have a Nice Day. This last song is not to be confused with a song of the same title on BING 'N' BASIE. To these are added the two duets with Johnny Mercer - The Pleasure of Your Company and Good Companions, both by Previn and Mercer, and as indicated, these have already been recorded with piano, bass, and drums only. Full orchestra will be added when the remaining titles are recorded in London probably late in January.

For the second album, ideas of title are still being kicked around - such as SONGS OF STAGE AND SCREEN, but I actually prefer the Broadway concept. At the last routining session, Bing ran through about 18 songs, and GLOCCA MORRA was among them at the suggestion of Pete Moore. Bing says he would like to do it. Anyway, here's the list:

> My Heart Stood Still; You are too beautiful; Dancing on the Ceiling; Yours Sincerely; How Are things in Glocca Morra?; Something to remember you by; Send in the Clowns.
>
> Thou Swell; You Took Advantage of Me; With a song in my Heart; I'll never fall in love again; Raindrops keep falling on my Head; Hellow Dolly; Cabaret; Looking at You; Just In Time; On A Clear Day you can see forever; Great Day.

This may not be anything like the final selection as the general package is, as I've said, still being kicked around - it may even become BING SINGS RODGERS & HART..... we could title it THAT'S BROADWAY and design the sleeve in a similar way to THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT. United Artists also like this idea - but naturally, WE ALL WANT BING TO BE HAPPY IN WHAT HE IS DOING. We are all hoping he will make the trip over here in January.....

.....I have been receiving lots of letters from members of ICC. Hopefully, I'll find time to reply to one each day. In the meantime, I hope you will find time to circulate the information in this letter....I thank them all for their interest. But most especially I am grateful to you, Les, for all your efforts and assistance in helping to get this project under way....

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Find time to circulate! This must, surely, be one of the most graphic, intriguing, and sheerly fascinating stories we've ever had the privilege and pleasure to print. Mr. Barnes has, with the indefatigable Leslie Gaylor, opened up a whole new, breath-taking vista of Crosbyana - another Parkinson Show, international radio and dealer promotion....the best albums Bing has done in years..... A fantastic prospect indeed.

Ken Barnes is so right about dubbing Bing onto pre-recorded tapes. It is indeed an unsatisfactory process. All artists, and especially Bing, react to musicians, being with them; he strikes up a rapport and it shines through the performance. As it is BOUND to do. Sitting in a lonely booth with headphones on, singing to recordings with not a musician in sight (only engineers) must be a cold, unsympathetic chore - and that too, will show in the performance. As a matter of fact, I would go further and provided the recording was expertly done, would prefer singers to sing in front of an audience! That would even more inspire the performance.

Amidst all this excitement, and excitement it certainly is, I feel constrained to be a bit of a Scrooge and offer some words of tempered caution: firstly, it might be wise to be not too disappointed if Bing doesn't make the Jan/Feb date. It is conceivable his doctors, despite his fantastic recovery, may be strongly against a European visit, especially to London, in those (usually) wretched months from a weather point of view. These are purely my own thoughts, but I do think it wise to bear them in mind.

Secondly, I must warn that a recording session is not, normally, a public occasion! I know so many of Bing's devoted admirers - and that means ALL OF US - are wishing, perhaps praying, that they can attend! I know I am. But I hope you will, with me, view the project in its true conception. That it would be the experience of a lifetime goes

without saying....but we must be realistic. And should it be allowed that, say, a dozen could attend, how could we possibly work out, or select, that lucky number from so many? Keep your fingers crossed by all means, however!

Personally, I can read Ken Barnes' letters again and again.....the prospects are indeed mind-boggling! That we are immensely grateful to Mr. Barnes for taking all this trouble to keep us in the picture with such authentic detail also goes without saying. We are even more grateful for the tremendous efforts he has made - including his flying trips to America - to make this incredible new saga of the Crosby career considerably more than a possibility.

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AND THOSE READERS WHO HAVE WRITTEN TO MR. BARNES WILL UNDERSTAND NOW WHY, IF THEY HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED A REPLY, THEY HAVEN'T - BUT THEY WILL EVENTUALLY.

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THE PICTURES OVERLEAF ARE, of course, from one of Bing's favourite pictures: BIRTH OF THE BLUES. This film lightly sketched facets of the history of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and was made in 1941. The film also featured Brian Donlevy as the cornet near-genius, and many of the musicians associated with Bing's recording activities, viz. Jack Teagarden, trombone; Perry Botkin, guitar; Harry Barris, Bing's legendary Rhythm Brother (on bass!); and others. And it certainly included Mary Martin with whom Bing sang that fabulous duet of "Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie"! I consider this one of Bing's best-ever duets for sheer production! He has done it with several different female partners and always it has been a wonderful performance.

The film also contains that wonderful version of "My Melancholy Baby" - a version totally surpassing the commercial version - ask Geo. Aylmer of Bury St. Edmunds!

Then there was that other wonderful "production" number: "The Waiter, the Porter, and the Upstairs Maid". Bing obviously revelled in this film....and if you haven't seen BIRTH OF THE BLUES on TV recently, these pictures will bring it to mind for you.

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THE AMERICAN NATIONAL ACADEMY OF RECORDING ARTS & SCIENCES.

This society established the Hall of Fame last year to honour records of outstanding historical significance made before the Grammy awards were launched in 1958. Bing Crosby recordings head the list of nominations for this Hall of Fame.

Bing, whose record of "White Christmas" is already in the Hall, had 20 of his records nominated from among 745 proposed this year.

Second to Bing came Benny Goodman with 15 recordings, followed by Frank Sinatra, 14; The Andrews Sisters and Charlie Parker, each with 12, tied for fourth place; Tommy Dorsey, 11 and Duke Ellington and Glenn Miller each with 10.

Only five of the 745 records nominated will eventually get into this Hall of Fame and these will be announced during the Academy's live television special THE GRAMMY AWARDS SHOW, on March 1, 1975, over the entire CBS network.

Reports of this historic event from America did not state what the five nominated records were. Perhaps readers will care to nominate their choice of pre-1958 recordings!

There can be little doubt that another Crosby recording at least will be deposited in the Hall of Fame, marking another signal honour for the peerless Bing Crosby.

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AT THE CLOSE OF A FANTASTIC YEAR -

BY JOHN BIGNELL: A few notes from a newer member on what joining the Circle has met to him..

In common with several other members (notably John Marshall) who'discovered'the International Crosby Circle in 1974, things will never be quite the same again! What began as a request for some information about a couple of LPs has now blossomed into almost a full-time, spare-time, occupation - if you see what I mean. Although heavily committed as secretary of a thriving football club with six teams, I have now had to re-arrange my spare time schedules to permit the listing, tabulating, filing, cross-referencing of countless items of Crosbyana, writing off to all points of the compass, even to the States! to obtain not only albums but also, incredibly, listings like the CREMO DIRECTORY, from which one learns with utter astonishment that Bing was the Cremo singer for just on four months during which he sang 153 songs, 101 of which WERE NEVER COMMERCIALLY RECORDED.

And so one awaits further directories for the Woodbury Soap Shows, Kraft Music Hall, Philco, Chesterfield, etc. etc. in order to discover how many other numbers were featured but never issued commercially. It must run into several hundreds - so even if one does eventually acquire all the microgroove recordings and even if all the old 78s are reissued on microgroove, the task of obtaining a complete library of every song ever sung by Bing will still only have just begun!

And amidst all this feverish activity mentioned above, one just has to find time to listen again and again to these LPs lovingly acquired over the course of the past year. A few random thoughts on my own modest collection - around 60 lps and 20 old 78s - come to mind as the year draws to a close.

> For instance, I am convinced that the only possible alternative signature tune for Bing would have been WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS, the 1931 uninhibited version. To me this number has everything - style, wonderful melody and lyrics - indeed, the philosophical message of the song, so movingly put over by Bing is applicable to all ages and both sexes - it is a universal song to put fresh heart into anyone feeling blue. It is the very essence of Bing's own philosophy and the way in which he has overcome his own personal problems, indeed tragedies, and yet continued to entertain the world for nearly fifty years. Sorry to go on about this but I was astonished this song did not seem to be among those listed by several readers when this was a topic of interest a couple of years ago.

PLEASE (sorry, Mr. Secretary!), LOVE IN BLOOM, MAY I? - these and many others have their champions as alternatives but to me they are restrictive in that they have a message only applicable to the young and in love - W.Y.T.I.D. has a message for all of us - in 1931 (a ghastly year economically) and in 1974 (not as bad as that but going that way!) - the message is equally applicable.

Anyway, you will have gathered by now I am very fond of this number (it would certainly be in my list of 8 to take on a Desert Island) which incidentally, I will be submitting for discussion and approval hopefully in the March edition of BING.

Bix Beiderbeck, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, - what companions Bing had to help launch his own spectacular career. Through the 'Thirties (easily my own favourite period), with the Mills Brothers (briefly alas), Connie Boswell (my all-time favourite lady artiste) Frances Langford (much neglected and under-rated in my opinion) into the 'Forties with the Andrews Sisters, Bob Hope, through the 'Fifties with Rosemary Clooney and into the 'Sixties when, just as everything seemed to be coming to a peaceful close about 1966/67 we get a resurgence at the end of the decade followed by Bing and Basie in the early 'Seventies. Now, after a serious illness which we must have all feared must have spelt the END certainly to the recording career, we hear the stupendous news that another album is on the way, recorded in the States with Johnny Mercer - as Reg Bristo has truly said, how fortunate we are to belong to the Circle devoted

(Cont. page 53....

BIRTH OF THE BLUES

John Bignell: cont. from p. 50

to such an incredible man - there seems to be just no end, happily, to his output, and the range of style from pure jazz to modern "pop" (altho' the latter has Bing's own inimitable interpretation, thankfully) is quite unique in recording history.

And so, in wishing every a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR, I feel we can all look forward to another cracking year of Crosbyana - my own New Year wish being that EMI/MCA will have the courage to issue some brand new albums of the many wonderful songs never yet issued on microgroove - the message is loud and clear - real music is coming back (we know it never went away) and in 1975 Mr. Harry Lillis Crosby will be way out in front once again - with nary a serious rival in sight.

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Well, that's fine! I share in the wonderful enthusiasm of such new members - live again my own experience on discovering that far from being the last Crosby fan left I was a comparative novice in Crosbana! Happily, John mentioned his other big interest - football. And there again, we are on very common ground for it certainly is mine - though I am being hard-pressed in these days of centre-backs, strikers, sweepers-up, midfield-men - everything except good old-fashioned centre-forwards, half-backs and full backs, etc. Nowadays we have "banana kicks" - nobody, it seems, swerves the ball....still, it remains an absorbing game, long-hair and kissing, too! However, back to Crosbyana! John Bignell has reiterated his belief that the 30's was Bing's best and his, John's, favourite decade. He did, also, in the previous issue and e'en as I printed that issue I KNEW what would happen! Christmas or no Christmas, here is a typical letter, written by an old Crosby friend:

LES BRICE, 5, Rush Green Gardens, Romford, Essex: I'd like to pass a few comments about John Bignell's letter in the September BING. After saying the he prefers the 1930 Crosby voice, fair enough, he states - and I quote: '...even in my teens I felt aware that the best of Bing was passed.' I'm quite sure that John Didn't mean his letter to sound as bigotted as this. But if this is his true opinion then one must assume that about this time his hearing began to fail!

Two things are always bound to bring a red haze, a bloody mist, to my eyes: one is "Bing who?", and the other - statements like John's.....

Too often over the years have we heard enthusiastic well-meaners dismissing the thousand-odd titles since the mid-30's as being inferior. This is a ludicrous assumption, and I shudder to think what Bing must feel when he reads such comments, and though he always knocks his own singing, I don't think he would have carried on recording had he thought his voice was not fit to be heard. By the same token, would we have bought his records? The criterion, in the last analysis, is 'sales'; the people who bought Crosby records after 1940 weren't all morons, or awaiting a second coming. They bought because they liked what they heard, and obviously still do. To take John's views a step further, why was it that none of the 300 odd tracks recorded before SWEET LEILANI weren't million sellers? Most of them were still available until the early 50's and by then, shortage of money couldn't have been the drawback. Of course Bing's voice was great in the 30's, but then, too, it was great in the 40's, 50's, 60's and today for John to say he was aware that Bing was past his best 35 years ago leaves me wondering why he, John, carries on.....I freely accept that some people can prefer a certain record above the rest, or a certain period. I cannot accept that one can say that for a specific time Bing was past his best when, at least to me, every new record is a magical experience. I'm sure I'm not alone with these views. I honestly feel that John's observations, otherwise entertaining, deserve to be answered."

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Ah by golly, the lovely world of Crosbyana! That was typical of several letters on the subject of "Bing was past his best...." What was it John Marshall dubbed me in the last issue? Archangel Reg? Had to take some ribbing on account of that: but let me try and be peacemaker at this joyous time of the year!

The virile, vibrant, often husky, very masculine voice of the 30's Bing, especially the EARLY 30's Bing, has left an undying impression on all those who remember it, who

EXPERIENCED that voice, as it burst on the world. It was so breath-takingly fresh, new. After several years, undeniably Bing's voice, for want of a better word, "smoothed" out; he became the mature balladeer. One has only to listen to the early 30's songs which Bing later did again - and WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS is an excellent example - to have these trend beautifully illustrated. He also did PLEASE, IT MUST BE TRUE and many other songs again ten or more years after the original recordings. On the other hand, as Les Brice points out inter-alia, most of Bing's million-sellers DID come, not in the 30's, but in the 'Forties! But here a note of caution must be introduced - I have never doubted that many early 30's numbers did easily achieve sales of a million. The Crosby office has confirmed that many of them, in fact, did reach this magical sales figures I can never accept that Bing didn't have such a landmark until SWEET LEILANI. Its ludicrous. One can cite scores of 40's, and 50's, songs which were superb: Walking the Floor over You; Its the Talk of the Town; Sweet Lorraine; Just a Little Lovin'; and what of the great singing on the album, THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS - in the Sixties?

You see how easy it is to go round, virtually, in circles! I think what ALL Crosbyites mean when they say they have a favourite period is: That WAS his best period, BUT, Bing at any time is better than anyone else! Perhaps John Bignell was a little sweeping in saying Bing had passed his best in the 30's - though he and many others will aver it is so, BUT as I say, Bing of any time is still supreme. The more I go on trying to tidy up the more complex it gets, don' it?

Where John Bignell IS a little unusual is that, normally, its people who remember Bing in the early 30's who plump for that halcyon period. Yet John wasn't one of those! As a matter of fact, since becoming Secretary I've noted that its usually the period at which an individual became first AWARE of Bing that he rates the best! Then, when the bug has really got him (or her!) they are liable to change their minds...slightly. I think this, above all other subjects, - that Bing had ONE single great period - creates more interest and correspondence than any other. And its good that it should. As a final word, I feel, when listening to Bing singing JUST FOR TONIGHT, on a "recent" album - there ain't much wrong with that!

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I (REG BRISTO) am only too painfully aware that I have, because of pressure on my time, left many letters unanswered. I greatly deplore this: in fact, it pains me to neglect thro' no real fault of my own, such lovely, sincere, letters. If you are one who expected an answer from me, please accept that I received and much appreciated your letter - and forgive my seeming ill-manners. I can only plead that I DO work hard at your Crosbyana..... and so many newcomers this year - in addition to the Johns, Bignell and Marshall ..Peter Monaghan back in the fold; Frank Wilgaus ditto, Grace Lambert, Yvonne Bowles, Bob Churchill (who, with his wife, has just been thrilled at receiving a wonderful, autographed picture from Bing), Pat Forster, the literary Peter Diffley, our ueno amigo from Espana, Carlos Ubach....so many. Lovely new friends....

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AND HERE IS A REAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR SOMEONE: Les Brice, address above, HAS A BRAND NEW COPY OF PART 3 OF "THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY" DISCOGRAPHY to exchange for a copy of AMERICA I HEAR YOU SINGING, or HIGH TOR with or without cash adjustment! Or if you haven't got the two albums Les wants, perhaps you could entice him to part with the book for something else! Write Les direct, please.

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IT IS POINTED OUT THAT FOR PRODUCTION TECHNICAL REASONS, PICTURE PAGES ARE NOT NUMBERED. THESE WOULD HAVE BEEN 41/42 and 51/52 - JUST SO'S YOU WON'T THINK YOU ARE MISSING PAGES!

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HAPPY CHRISTMAS! JOYEUX NOELLE!! MUCHO FELICIDADES!!! TO ALL CROSBY FRIENDS, EVERYWHERE - BRITAIN, US, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, FRANCE, GERMANY, IRELAND, HOLLAND (dear Noor!) EVERYWHERE !

AND A WONDERFUL - CROSBY - 1975.....

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IT'S THAT MAN AGAIN!

THE SMOOTH-FLOWING PEN OF JOHN C. MARSHALL IN SEASONAL MOOD WITH:

GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

IT WAS A MATTER OF WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS and all through the house there ran that electrifying blend of excitement, avarice, dyspepsia and doom-laden despair which masquerades as the Season of Goodwill. On the one hand, junior members of the menage were busily developing their annual conjunctivitis, symptomatic of endless peeking below beds, on top of cupboards and into any recess, however sacrosanct hitherto, wherein might be secreted mysterious wrapped packages. Elsewhere, in a dimly-lit garret, staring out dismally from under the latest in a series of cold compresses, sat a cadaverous figure, fingering his worry beads and weeping unashamedly into a hillock of tradesmens' final reminders. Held for a trice in the candles' flicker, he was revealed as a person of unmistakeable quality, the leonine head crowned with a mane of russet curls, the extravagantly handsome profile, the eyes as blue as any Capri grotto, temporarily misted over - or perchance glazed, by some inner vision.

He alone among those present had survived enough holly-decked fiasco's to know better, yet some primeval instinct - older even than most of the material on Christmas With The Stars, held him from hurrying downstairs and hurling himself under the runners of the first passing sleigh. A few more days and he would again find himself seated in a far corner of the living-room below, ankle-deep in discarded mince-pies, shattered plastic and the other by-products of far Hong Kong. He would sob quietly into a glass of fine old Spanish-type cleaning fluid, squint thro' the miasma from a 10p Whiff and thus, suitably anethesetised, give himself up to whosoever chose to cast the first soggy Yuletide televsion offering - recorded no doubt in July. Paper-hat tilted just enough to hide the desolation, a Grim Sentinel without a cause, the laughter machine might serve to drown the rumble as yet another ulcer perforated.

C'est la vie! Not t forget Humbug! Christmas assuredly in the class of fing's ain't what they used to be.... The barren tundra of televsion beckoning with all the warmth of World War Three and no traces of the simple lost textures that made December a watershed for the years dreaming. A stocking with a few nuts, an apple, and an orange. WAS it asking too much for a Tiger Tim Annual? There would be Arthur Askey, there was ALWAYS Arthur Askey; a special story from Uncle Mac, perhaps Henry Hall's Christmas Guest Night and certainly more than enough pleasure to expect from any one day. Around midnight there would be the sounds of the upper-crust ringing in the welkin from the Savoy - and so to bed, far from the madding 74's and too late to alter the fact that St. Nicholas, the true old Master Masochist, will soon be gone again, safely under sedation for another year.

Abruptly the door opens and a ragged urchin appears framed in the aperture. He stands staring thro' a crevice in the mound of bills, his twin laser beams impervious to the misery inherent in the scene, forever seeking some unnoticed nook or cranny:

"The post's just been. Its a parcel for you Dad!"

Hands, strong but shapely enough to cause a Van Cliburn or a Christian Bernard to mottle with envy, tear at the wrappings, revealing two white cardboard boxes and these in turn open to expose twin reels of pristine recording tape. Legs, stolen from the young Dietrich or Grable, carry the mournful one across the crest of buff envelopes in a gazelle's leap and in a trice, one of the tapes revolves on the nearby Grundig. He stands, carved from finest Italian marble, ear lobes akimbo and a rare smile softening the austere beauty.

I am always thrilled to bits when I receive a new supply of Bing Crosby Philco Shows - the subject of the above scenario being, of course, your humble servant - and for a time I can be counted as absent from whatever mundane matter might be occupying the remainder of humanity, be it flood, famine, or earthquake. Ken Carpenter and John Scott Trotter have me firmly by the aural organs until the final note.

What better time to announce to the unsuspecting world that if they are on the look-out for a Christmas tale to tell their young, they need only recount that in a town some way to the East - let us call it Chatham - there lives a man who for the merest bagatelle, dispenses undiluted magic. For reasons best known to himself, or perhaps his parents, he has adopted the soubriquet of Bob Roberts, but he doesn't have me fooled for a moment. Bringing as he does fresh hope and light into the world, with each new delivery, I pointedly refuse to believe that its merely a hobby. I consider myself lucky that I have been blessed with the good sense to reject the growing-up syndrome almost totally out of hand and I can, as a result, with the practised ease of the congenital nostalgist, ignore the grey hairs and whatever slight tape hiss there is. It is as though I had been picked up by some benevolent spirit and dropped safely back in the sweet long ago where, despite a (fairly) recent war and the heart-stopping future, Christmas was something that did not automatically turn the adult blood to jelly.

The Nuremburg Trials were going strong; William Joyce had been hanged and Harry Truman had still to officially declare the complete end of hostilities - but I listen and join in with the audience as Bing goes into my favourite version of Adeste Fidelis. All right, so you already have a dozen sides of White Christmas and the main story is no great epic - the compensations are manyfold. If, as was its prime function, a few extra Philco's were flogged. That is the way things are in America; so be it, there is no need to be reminded that Christmas and Commerce go hand in mitten and Ken Carpenter's few brief words are themselves almost a benediction. Its simply a chunk of delightful history that one can nibble at contentedly while bloated with today's alleged feast.

In time I hope to join the Philco gang at other following festivals, but their's is a heady brew that must be sipped slowly and with care. Bob reminds me his cellar is vast and the cintage Crosby close on inexhaustible. Why - this could go on for years! Name after boggling name comes unreeling down the years and it takes a strong throat not to tighten every few minutes or so. Those pop songs you had forgotten about, the ones that did not aspire to be Standards. Listen to them dusted off and left sparkling, and join the many re-evaluations that take place after each new arrival thro' the post. EMI is doing a fine job; so far there are lots of goodies on the shelf, but this is living, breathing, clanger-dropping real-life Crosby in his shirt-sleeves - and frequently almost enjoying himself as much as the listeners. Bing and Spike Jones; Bing and George Jessel, and Jolson and Durante and Garland and - ah the hell, I can't sit here for a week typing names.

But its especially Bing and Bob, and I don't mean Hope, altho' as I said earlier, if you do need some of that commodity, a certain Mr. Roberts has a sackful. For the man who thought he had everything, or one who warrants something extra special, Chatham is where its at.....

Thus, Bing survives, Bob survives, the GPO and Agfa survive - so perhaps, after all, fings ain't so bad....

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I rather get the impression that John Marshall likes dipping into Bob Roberts's sackful of Radio Crosby!

I expect most members have spotted the picture of Bing on the front cover of CASSETTE & CARTRIDGE in the newsagents - fairly authentic story inside, too. This issue also contains a tribute to Luis Alberto del Parana, leader of Los Paraguayos whose premature death was a sad blow to yours truly, Reg Bristo. (Thanks in passing, to readers who wrote to me on this sad subject)....but talking of Paraguay it leads me to Bing's obvious appreciation of Guadalajara, the second city of Mexico, where he recuperated. He must hear a lot of the S. American music that I find so fascinating there. And Guadalajara was obviously very good for him!

And finally, did you read that, after noting that Bing was packing up smoking on his doctor's advice, a man in Birmingham wrote asking if he could buy one of his, Bing's, pipes? Bing's reply was characteristic - the man received a parcel - containing one of his pipes, of course!

So here we end the 1974 Christmas issue of BING - once again, A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, and a happier 1975 than, to be honest, looks possible as we close this issue.